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ST. ANSELM'S  
*PROSLOGION*

WITH

*A Reply on Behalf of the Fool*  
by Gaunilo

AND

*The Author's Reply to Gaunilo*

TRANSLATED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND  
PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENTARY

BY

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## PREFACE

IN this book a new translation of St. Anselm's *Proslogion* is offered, together with the texts of the subsequent debate between St. Anselm and Gaunilo. The introduction to these texts attempts to set the *Proslogion* within the context of St. Anselm's life and thought; and the commentary expounds and assesses the arguments contained in them.

I have been at pains to clarify St. Anselm's position in the *Proslogion* as he intended it, because in the past it has had all kinds of arbitrary interpretations foisted upon it. St. Anselm did not ask himself precisely the same questions about faith and reason as the philosophers of the thirteenth century, such as St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, were to ask; nor, of course, did he consider the questions that theologians and philosophers are compelled to put to themselves at the present day. On the whole matter of faith and reason St. Anselm's thinking has a fluid, uncrystallized, or (blessed word!) ambivalent character, and it is all too tempting, and all too easy, if one comes to the *Proslogion* with one's own favoured theory about faith and reason, to make St. Anselm either into a precocious Aquinas or into a twelfth-century Karl Barth. What I have tried to do is to re-present St. Anselm's ideas as he intended them.

I have not, however, confined myself to a neutral exposition or re-presentation of St. Anselm's ideas in the *Proslogion*; but I have gone on to discuss them in a critical way and to argue with them. Many medieval texts are of antiquarian interest only, but the *Proslogion* is still of real moment for the philosopher as well as for the historian, and we can do St. Anselm (and ourselves) the honour of arguing with him, philosopher to philosopher, much as we might argue with a contemporary.

The translation keeps as close as possible to the literal sense of the original texts consistent with making good sense in English. St. Anselm's style, upon which he obviously prided himself, is characterized by elaborate antitheses and word-plays, oratorical flights and crescendos, and, in the *Proslogion*,

by a mixture of intensely fervent prayer with fine and subtle philosophical analysis in which every word and nuance counts. Inevitably, unless the translator engages in a good deal of glossing, he must miss much of the rich flavour of St. Anselm's writing. However, for the purposes of philosophical discussion, there are advantages in a fairly literal translation even though it exacts a certain stylistic price.

The *Proslogion* is translated together with Gaunilo's reply and St. Anselm's counter-reply. Eadmer, St. Anselm's disciple and biographer, tells us that St. Anselm himself wished the three texts to be collected and considered together. 'A friend,' he writes, 'sent this [Gaunilo's reply] to Anselm who read it with pleasure, and after thanking his critic he wrote his own reply to this reply. He had this appended to the tract which had been sent to him, and returned it to the friend who had sent it, requesting any others who deigned to possess this tract to append to the end of it the criticism of his argument and his own reply to the criticism.'

The Latin text of the *Proslogion* and of the two annexed texts is reproduced from the magnificent edition of St. Anselm's works, *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, by Dom. F. S. Schmitt, O.S.B. (Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh, 6 vols., 1946-61). References in Latin to other texts of St. Anselm are also to Dom. Schmitt's edition, and I wish to make very grateful acknowledgement to Dom. Schmitt and to the publishers, Nelson & Sons, for their generous permission to make use of it.

M. J. C.



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ST. ANSELM'S  
*PROSLOGION*

# INTRODUCTION

## THE *PROSLOGION* ARGUMENT

IT is not too much to claim that St. Anselm's argument for the existence of God in the *Proslogion* is one of the most enduring texts in the history of philosophy. The boldness and originality (or—according to one's point of view—the outrageousness) of the argument compel one's interest and force one to declare oneself either for or against it, and it has provoked lively controversy right from the time of St. Anselm's contemporary and first adversary, Gaunilo of Marmoutier, to the present day.

To some extent we have to qualify what has just been said, for, curiously, there is little explicit reference to the *Proslogion* argument by St. Anselm's own immediate disciples in the early twelfth century. So Rodulfus or Ralph, in his *Libellus primus de nesciente et sciente*, uses a primitive causal proof to establish the existence of a First Cause of life, without referring at all to the *Proslogion* argument of the master.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, a reminiscence of the *Proslogion* in the work of another of Anselm's English disciples, Gilbert Crispin, abbot of Westminster between 1085 and 1117. In Gilbert's interesting *Disputatio Christiani cum Gentile de Fide Christi*, 'Christianus' proves that there can be only one God by arguing that 'God is that than which nothing greater or better exists', from which it follows that there cannot be a number of Gods.<sup>2</sup> Apart from this, however, St. Anselm's *Proslogion* might have fallen stillborn from the scriptorium for all the influence it had upon his own intellectual milieu.

This same neglect of the *Proslogion* argument continues through the latter part of the twelfth century, owing, no doubt,

<sup>1</sup> On Rodulfus, who is probably to be identified with Ralph, a monk of Caen who subsequently became prior of Rochester under Lanfranc, and abbot of Battle (1107–24) under Anselm, see R. W. Southern, 'St. Anselm and his English Pupils', in *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, (MARS), i, 1941–3, 15–19, and the same author's *St. Anselm and his Biographer*, Cambridge, 1963, pp. 206–9.

<sup>2</sup> 'Deus est quo nihil maius ac melius sit, et quod super omnia est.' Text edited by C. C. J. Webb, in MARS, iii, 1954, 58–77. Again, in Gilbert's dialogue, *Disputatio Iudaei et Christiani*, the Jew defines God as 'quo nichil maius sive sufficientius cogitari potest': see Gisleberti Crispini Westmonasterii Abbatis, *Disputatio Iudaei et Christiani*, ed. B. Blumenkranz, Ultraieci, 1958. On Gilbert see J. Armitage Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster*, Cambridge, 1911; and R. W. Southern, 'St. Anselm and Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster', in MARS, iii, 1954, 78–115.

to the sudden and quite radical change in the philosophical climate that followed the introduction of new translations of the works of Aristotle soon after St. Anselm's death.<sup>1</sup> In the early thirteenth century, however, St. Anselm's argument began to enjoy a considerable vogue. William of Auxerre, in his *Summa Aurea*, written between 1215 and 1231, is the first known thirteenth-century thinker to refer to the *Proslogion* argument,<sup>2</sup> and he is followed by other contemporaries such as the Oxford Dominican, Richard Fishacre, and the Franciscan, Alexander of Hales. Richard Fishacre has an extremely ingenious variant of the Anselmian proof: thus he says, God may be defined as the 'most simple being' ('ens simplicissimum'); but such a being cannot be distinguished from its existence, for then it would no longer be simple; therefore its essence must be identical with its existence, which is to say it must exist necessarily.<sup>3</sup>

Some thirty years later the great St. Bonaventure takes up the *Proslogion* argument and gives it an important place in his natural theology. In his *Quaestiones disputatae* he concludes: 'The truth "God exists" is a truth which is most certain in itself in that it is a primary and most immediate truth. For not only is the cause of the predicate contained in the subject, but the existence which is predicated of the subject is absolutely identical with the subject. That is why, just as the uniting of a subject and predicate which are removed to the greatest degree from each other is completely repugnant to the intellect, so also the dividing of what is one and indivisible is not less repugnant to the intellect. Thus, just as it is false in an absolutely evident way that the same thing can both exist and not exist, or that it should at the same time be the greatest existent

<sup>1</sup> A. Daniels, O.S.B., has remarked upon the rareness of manuscripts of the *Proslogion* in twelfth-century monastic libraries. See his collected thirteenth-century texts referring to the *Proslogion*: *Quellenbeiträge und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im dreizehnten Jahrhundert*, Münster, 1909, p. 111, in the series *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*. There is, though, an echo of the *Proslogion* formula, 'quo nichil melius cogitari potest', as well as other Anselmian themes, in the work of Achard of St. Victor, who was abbot of St. Victor between 1155 and 1160 and who died in 1171. See 'Achard de St. Victor' by M.-Th. Alverney, in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, xxi, 1954, 299-306.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa Aurea*, lib. i, cap. i. Text in Daniels, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Sententiarum*, lib. i, dist. iii. Daniels, p. 23. For a discussion of Richard's argument see J. Chatillon, 'De Guillaume d'Auxerre à saint Thomas d'Aquin: l'argument de saint Anselme chez les premiers scolastiques du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in the collection *Spicilegium Beccense*, i, Paris, 1959.

and not exist in any way, so also it is most evidently true that the primary and greatest thing exists. . . .<sup>1</sup>

It was, so it seems, partly against St. Bonaventure's version of the Anselmian argument that St. Thomas Aquinas argued.<sup>2</sup> Aquinas, it is well known, completely rejects the argument, or what he took to be Anselm's argument, though, as we shall see later, it can be shown that his criticisms rest upon a misunderstanding. At all events, understood or misunderstood, the *Proslogion* argument continued to be discussed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries by such thinkers as Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, and William of Ware.<sup>3</sup> Duns Scotus, for one, took the argument seriously and revised or 'coloured' it so as to make it into a proof of the infinity of the 'First Being'.<sup>4</sup> Again, in the *De Primo Principio*, Scotus exploits Anselm's idea of a 'pure perfection' and argues that the idea of God as a synthesis of 'pure perfections' cannot contain any contradiction, since contradiction can only occur where something is posited and something is negated.<sup>5</sup> Scotus's version can be considered as a bridge between St. Anselm's argument and the later variations of it developed by Leibniz and Descartes. The Leibnizian formula, 'If God is possible, God exists', derives in fact from Scotus.<sup>6</sup> ✓

After Duns Scotus, other fourteenth-century thinkers such as the Cambridge master Robert Holkot and John of Beverley also gave the *Proslogion* argument close attention, while John

<sup>1</sup> Text in Chatillon, *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 224-5; other texts in Daniels, *Quellenbeiträge* . . . , pp. 38-40. Chatillon remarks (loc. cit., pp. 229-30) that for St. Bonaventure St. Anselm's argument was linked with St. Augustine's proof of God through the notion of truth conceived as a participation in the divine truth. 'It is because the primary truth dwells in us and manifests itself in us in a certain way that we know its existence with evidence. . . . In this idea of something than which one cannot conceive of a greater, where St. Bonaventure claimed to have perceived a reflection of the divine light, St. Thomas Aquinas would recognise only a concept.'

<sup>2</sup> Aquinas discusses the argument in his *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. II, art. I; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, x, xi.

<sup>3</sup> Texts in Daniels, *Quellenbeiträge* . . .

<sup>4</sup> See E. Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot*, Paris, 1952, pp. 166 ff.

<sup>5</sup> See A. Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, New York, 1946, ch. vii, p. 174.

<sup>6</sup> 'Si potest esse, potest esse a se, et ita est a se', *De Primo Principio*, iii. 2. The principle, however, comes originally from Aristotle: 'In the case of eternal things, what can be must be', *Physics*, iii, c. 4, 203b30; *De Gen. et Corr.* ii, c. 2, 337b35. On Scotus's position see A. Koyré, *Essai sur l'idée de Dieu et les preuves de son existence chez Descartes*, Paris, 1922, p. 195.

Wyclif, always an admirer of St. Anselm, adopted the argument as his own in his *Summa de Ente* (c. 1369).<sup>1</sup>

Even after the waning of scholasticism and the beginning of the philosophical revolution represented principally by Descartes, St. Anselm's argument maintained its interest for philosophers. Whether or not Descartes knew St. Anselm's *Proslogion* at first hand, there is no doubt that it influenced his own celebrated proof of the existence of God based on the idea of a 'supremely perfect being', though it is open to dispute whether or not the Cartesian proof is a legitimate descendant of St. Anselm's argument.<sup>2</sup>

Leibniz was greatly attracted by the Anselmian argument and described it as 'very beautiful and really very ingenious' though needing extra elements to make it logically rigorous.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Kant, as is well known, rejected the argument, though it seems that he did not know St. Anselm's texts at first hand and that his criticisms of what he confusingly calls the 'ontological proof' (a proof abstracting from all experience and concluding *a priori* from simple concepts to the existence of a supreme being) are directed primarily against Descartes and Leibniz.<sup>4</sup> Whether or not Kant's objections affect the *Proslogion* argument depends, of course, upon whether the Anselmian and Cartesian arguments involve the same principles and have the same logical structure, and we shall have to reserve this very moot question until later. However, whatever the truth about this, from Kant's time onwards it came to be assumed that the criticisms of the 'ontological proof' in the *Critique of Pure Reason* were fatal to St. Anselm's argument. Consequently, in post-Kantian philosophy, the argument came to be viewed as a quaint and naïve medieval

<sup>1</sup> See R. W. Southern, 'St. Anselm and his English Pupils', p. 3. For Wyclif see *Johannes Wyclif: Summa de Ente, Libri Primi Tractatus Primus et Secundus*, ed. with introduction by S. Harrison Thomson, Oxford, 1930, pp. 78-79.

<sup>2</sup> Koyré, in his *Essai sur l'idée de Dieu . . . chez Descartes*, claims that Descartes knew of St. Anselm's argument at first hand, though he pretended ignorance of it. Gilson, on the other hand, claims that Descartes knew St. Anselm's position only through Aquinas's distorted version of it. See his *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien*, Paris, 1930, especially ch. iv, 'Descartes et saint Anselme'. See also 'Position anselmienne et démarche cartésienne', by Joseph de Finance, in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 259-72. For Descartes's proof see *Discourse*, 4th part; *Meditations*, v.

<sup>3</sup> *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, Book IV, ch. x.

<sup>4</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, 'Transcendental Dialectic', Book II, ch. iii, sec. 4.

conundrum easily to be disposed of by rehearsing the Kantian axiom that existence is not a predicate. On the neo-scholastic side also St. Anselm's argument came to be neglected because it was considered that Aquinas's refutation of it was final and definitive, though there were certain nineteenth-century Catholic thinkers who revived a psychologized form of it.<sup>1</sup>

St. Anselm's brain-child, however, has weathered this period of condescension and neglect and is once more the subject of philosophical discussion. On the Continent, for example, over the last thirty years Anselm's work has been exhaustively discussed from many angles, and the *Proslogion* argument has claimed the attention of thinkers as diverse as Karl Barth and Étienne Gilson.<sup>2</sup>

Again, even in the contemporary Anglo-Saxon philosophical world where, one might suppose, there would not be a great deal of sympathy with the kind of philosophical reasoning exemplified in the *Proslogion*, there has been a modest but significant renaissance of interest in the Anselmian argument.<sup>3</sup>

Quite apart from this, however, the *Proslogion* is a genuinely 'classical' text in philosophical theology. Whatever one may think, in the last resort, of the cogency of St. Anselm's argument, it nevertheless brings up, in a very profound and vivid way, certain quite fundamental points about the 'logic' of the concept 'God' which have to be pondered by anyone thinking in the field of philosophical theology. So long, then, as the enterprise of philosophical theology continues, we may expect to have the *Proslogion* argument still very much with us.

<sup>1</sup> See J. Bainvel's article 'Anselme de Cantorbéry' in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, i, pt. ii, 1327-60.

<sup>2</sup> K. Barth, *Fides quaerens intellectum*, Munich, 1931, English translation 1960. É. Gilson, 'Sens et nature de l'argument de saint Anselme', in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, ix, 1934, 5-51. See also the various articles on the *Proslogion* argument in *Spic. Bec.*: H. Bouillard, 'La Preuve de Dieu dans le *Proslogion* et son interprétation par Karl Barth'; A. Forest, 'L'Argument de saint Anselme dans la philosophie réflexive'; H. de Lubac, 'Sur le chapitre xiv<sup>e</sup> du *Proslogion*'. See also M. Cappuyns, 'L'Argument de saint Anselme', in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, xi, 1934, 313-16, for a review of discussions in the 1930's of the *Proslogion* argument.

<sup>3</sup> See D. P. Henry, 'The *Proslogion* Proofs', in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, v, 1955, 147-51; C. K. Grant, 'The Ontological Disproof of the Devil', in *Analysis*, xvii, 1957, 71-72; N. Malcolm, 'Anselm's Ontological Arguments', in *The Philosophical Review*, lxi, 1960, 41-62. See also *ibid.*, lxx, 1961, for the many replies to Malcolm's article.



## ST. ANSELM: LIFE AND TIMES

A BENEDICTINE monk after a misspent youth; abbot and teacher at Bec; Archbishop of Canterbury; adversary of William Rufus and Henry I; a central figure in the Investiture quarrel; recognized by the Pope and all Christendom as the first theologian of the age—the events and achievements of St. Anselm's life are so dramatic and remarkable that it is small wonder that he has been the subject of so many biographies.<sup>1</sup> The first, which remains the best, was that written by his English secretary and devout disciple Eadmer. Eadmer wrote two accounts of the saint's life, *De Vita et Conversatione Anselmi Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, which is mainly concerned with his private life, and the *Historia Novorum*, which is an account of Anselm's public career as Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>2</sup> Eadmer's work has qualities of sobriety and objectivity that make it stand out among medieval histories and biographies, not usually remarkable for these qualities, and the *Historia Novorum* has been described as 'the first major Latin historical work in England since Bede and . . . one of the greatest achievements of Anglo-Norman historiography'.<sup>3</sup> Other medieval biographies, such as those by Baldwin of Tournai and John of Salisbury, are for the most part based upon Eadmer's two works.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Among the older biographies, those by R. W. Church, *St. Anselm*, London, 1888; J. H. Rigg, *St. Anselm of Canterbury*, London, 1896; C. de Rémusat, *St. Anselme de Cantorbéry*, Paris, 1868, still retain their value, although they all tend to be over-sympathetic to St. Anselm and a little uncritical in their approach. This defect is more than compensated by R. W. Southern's fresh and astringent appraisal of St. Anselm's life and career in his book *St. Anselm and his Biographer*, Cambridge, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Both edited by M. Rule in the Rolls Series, lxxxi, London, 1884. See also the new edition of Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi* by R. W. Southern: *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, by Eadmer*, London, 1962.

<sup>3</sup> N. F. Cantor, *Church, Kingship and Lay Investiture in England: 1089-1135*, Princeton, 1958, p. 39. For a balanced assessment of Eadmer's two works see Southern, *St. Anselm and his Biographer*, pp. 218-43.

<sup>4</sup> Baldwin's biography is incorporated in the *Chronicle of Ralph de Diceto*, ed. Stubbs, Rolls Series, lxxviii (1), 223-38; for John of Salisbury's life see Migne, *P.L.* cxcix. 1009-40; see also William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Pontificum*, Rolls Series, ed. Hamilton, lii. 74 ff. Two other works also give a little oblique information not available in Eadmer's accounts. One is the so-called *Liber de Similitudinibus*, once ascribed to Anselm, but now thought to be by another (possibly William of

St. Anselm was born in 1033 near Aosta, now in Italy and then on the frontier of Lombardy and Burgundy. He was most probably a Burgundian by race.<sup>1</sup> Save for a few pious tales almost nothing is known of his parents or of his youth, although it has been conjectured that his mother Ermenburga had some connexion with the Counts of Savoy. His father, Gundulf, seems also to have been a man of substance. Anselm's mother died when he was in his twenties and, according to Eadmer's account, 'the ship of his heart, having as it were lost its anchor, drifted almost completely among the waves of the world'.<sup>2</sup> Quarrelling with his father, he left home at the age of twenty-three, and after wanderings in Burgundy and France, where he probably spent some time in the schools of Fleury-sur-Loire and Chartres, he arrived in Normandy in 1059. The Benedictine abbey of Bec, sixteen miles south-west of Rouen, founded in 1040 by Herluin, attracted Anselm's interest, mainly through the reputation of a fellow Italian Lanfranc, then prior of the abbey and master of its celebrated school, and then also engaged in controversy with Berengar. Lanfranc was but one of a number of Italian scholars who came to Normandy in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. William of Volpiano and John of Ravenna, for example, had created a school at Fécamp, and another Italian, Suppo, became abbot of Mont St. Michel in 1033, while two of Lanfranc's nephews, Paul and Lanfranc, also followed their uncle to Normandy.<sup>3</sup> At all events, Lanfranc, described by Pope Clement II as 'a guide and light leading the minds of the Latins into a study of the trivium and quadrivium which had fallen into neglect and profound obscurity', seems to have provided as broad a study of the

Malmesbury), although based upon Anselm's own sayings. There is also a similar collection of Anselmian sayings entitled *Dicta Anselmi*, written by Alexander, a monk of Christ Church. R. W. Southern has discussed the significance of both works in his essay 'St. Anselm and his English Pupils'. Southern comments on the *Dicta* as follows (p. 8): 'They show how fragmentary and occasional a part of his teaching the great treatises were, and how much he was absorbed in the ordinary necessities of monastic instruction.' See also the same author's *St. Anselm and his Biographer*, pp. 221-5.

<sup>1</sup> See B. Secret, 'Saint Anselme, bourguignon d'Aoste', in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 561-70; and *Epistola* 262, Schmitt, iv. 176-7, where Anselm speaks of his family's being related to Humbert of Savoy.

<sup>2</sup> Eadmer, *Vita*, i. iv; Southern, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cantor, *op. cit.*, p. 23; J. Laporte, 'Saint Anselme et l'ordre monastique', in *Spic. Bec.*, p. 455.

'humanities' as was available at the time. It is known that Lanfranc wrote two (now lost) logical works, one entitled *Dialectica* and the other *Quaestiones*, and he seems to have given particular emphasis to the study of logic. William of Malmesbury reports, a little tartly, that 'his pupils constantly had their mouths full of it'.<sup>1</sup>

His father having died, leaving him all his property, Anselm debated whether he should return home to Italy or become a monk attached to Bec. He decided on this latter course and entered the monastery at Bec as a novice in 1060. With exaggerated modesty Anselm says that he chose to enter Bec rather than Cluny because he knew that at Bec Lanfranc's intellectual brilliance would so overshadow him that he would be left free to meditate upon God without distraction!<sup>2</sup> Anselm's rise to positions of authority in the monastery was rapid, and when Lanfranc went to a new monastery, founded by William the Conqueror at Caen in 1063, Anselm succeeded him as Prior of Bec. He had held this post for fifteen years, 1063-78, when, upon the death of Herluin, he became abbot of the monastery. A medieval abbot, particularly of a large and famous monastery such as Bec, enjoyed considerable social and political prestige and power, and during his abbacy Anselm came to have an international reputation as a counsellor and adviser. The scope of his influence in high places can be gauged from his letters to personages as diverse as Baldwin I, King of Jerusalem; Matilda, Countess of Tuscany; the King of Scots; the High King of Ireland, and the Earl of Orkney.<sup>3</sup> We know also that when William the Conqueror lay dying at Rouen in 1087 he sent for Anselm to hear his confession.

Apart from these advisory activities and his considerable administrative duties as head of Bec, Anselm carried on his scholarly work in a very intense way and made Bec an even

<sup>1</sup> *De Gestis Regum*, ed. Stubbs, Rolls Series, xc (ii). On Lanfranc see A. J. Macdonald, *Lanfranc, A Study of his Life, Work and Writing*, Oxford, 1926; and R. W. Southern, 'Lanfranc and Berengar of Tours', in *Studies Presented to F. M. Powicke*, London, 1948, pp. 27-28.

<sup>2</sup> *Vita*, I. iv; Southern, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Letters in Schmitt, iii, iv, v. See also J. F. A. Mason, 'Saint Anselm's Relations with Laymen: Selected Letters', in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 547-60. 'Not only as a scholar but also as an Archbishop, Anselm was an international figure, whose interests through birth, office or friendship extended from the new Christian state in Syria, through Italy to the far fringes of the British Isles.'

more famous intellectual centre than it had been under Lanfranc. It was during these thirty years at Bec, 1063-93, that Anselm wrote his *Meditations* and what we might loosely call his philosophical works, the *Monologion* (1076), the *Proslogion* (1077-8), the *De Grammatico*, the *De Veritate*, and the *De Libertate Arbitrii* (1080-5). During this period he also wrote the *De Casu Diaboli* (1085-90) and began a work against the arch-nominalist Roscelin, which later became the *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* (1092-4). The latter work, together with his other theological treatises (though Anselm himself would not recognize our distinction between his philosophical and theological works), the *Cur Deus Homo* (1094-8), the *De Conceptu Virginali* (1099-1100), the *De Processione Spiritus Sancti* (1102), the *Epistola de Sacrificio Azymi et Fermentati*, and the *De Sacramentis Ecclesiae* (1106-7) were all written during Anselm's pontificate as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109. In his last years also Anselm wrote two other philosophical works, one the *De Concordia* (1107-8), and the other an unfinished logical treatise which has been given the name *De Potestate et Impotentia, Possibilitate et Impossibilitate, Necessitate et Libertate*.<sup>1</sup>

Tantalizingly little is known of St. Anselm's teaching methods at Bec or of the structure of the scholastic curriculum that the young monks followed there.<sup>2</sup> Eadmer tells us that Anselm taught 'not as others do, but in a vastly different way, explaining each point by referring to common and well-known examples, and basing it on solid arguments, without any ornaments or tricks of speech'.<sup>3</sup> Another contemporary, Guibert of Nogent, also recounts how St. Anselm guided him in his reading and studies. St. Anselm, he says, recommended

<sup>1</sup> This extremely interesting logical work was discovered by F. S. Schmitt and edited by him under the title, *Ein neues unvollendetes Werk des hl. Anselm von Canterbury: 'De Potestate et impotentia, possibilitate et impossibilitate, necessitate et libertate'*, in the series *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, xxxiii, 1936. On the chronology of St. Anselm's works see F. S. Schmitt, 'Zur Chronologie der Werke des hl. Anselm', in *Revue Bénédictine*, xlv, 1932, 322-50.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. R. W. Southern, 'Lanfranc and Berengar', p. 27: 'The two chief obstacles to the understanding of the thought of the 11th century are our ignorance of the scholastic methods of the period and an inadequate biographical knowledge of the masters who developed these methods. Between Gerbert (d. 1103), whose methods of teaching have been sketched by his pupil Richer, and the masters of the early 12th century, the lecture rooms of Europe are only faintly illuminated.'

<sup>3</sup> *Vita*, i. xxxi; Southern, p. 56.

the *Moralia* of St. Gregory to him as valuable for the interpretation of Scripture, and he taught Guibert the elements of philosophy while commenting upon the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> In his various writings Anselm often uses the dialogue form, which he says is 'clearer and more pleasing to many minds, particularly to those who are slower in intelligence',<sup>2</sup> and it may be that this reflects his own teaching methods. In any event the formal scholastic method of argument had, for good or ill, not yet been invented, nor did St. Anselm have a full-blown technical philosophical vocabulary at his disposal. For the most part he made do with everyday language. This no doubt had its disadvantages, for one often feels while reading St. Anselm that he did not have a sufficient arsenal of concepts and distinctions to express precisely what he meant to say. But it also had some advantages in that St. Anselm's thought was never bemused by abstractions in the way in which the thinking of some of the later scholastics certainly was. As he puts it, his works are the fruit of meditation 'from the point of view of one seeking through silent reasoning within himself things he knows not'.<sup>3</sup>

If we do not know in detail how St. Anselm taught and studied at Bec, we do however know in general outline how studies were organized in monasteries of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries similar to Bec.<sup>4</sup> Bec was a monastery following the Benedictine Rule and teaching and learning had to be fitted into the time left over from the religious exercises (the 'Opus Dei') that occupied a good deal of the day. Thus the monks rose between midnight and 2 a.m. to chant the collection of psalms, lessons, and prayers known as Nocturns (later as Matins). This was followed by the office of Lauds, the whole night office taking about two hours. The monks then returned to bed until the first office of the day, known as Prime, which was said at about 6 a.m. in summer and at daybreak in winter.

<sup>1</sup> *De Vita sua sive monodiarum libri tres*, P.L. clvi. 874.

<sup>2</sup> *Cur Deus Homo*, i. i; Schmitt, ii. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Proslogion*, Preface, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> See P. Delhay, 'L'Organisation scolaire au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Traditio*, v, 1947, pp. 211-68; C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, Harvard, 1927, ch. ii; G. Paré, A. Brunet, P. Tremblay, *La Renaissance du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Toronto, 1933; R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, London, 1959, ch. iv; J. de Ghellinck, *Le Mouvement théologique du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1948.

The monks would then wash and go about their tasks until the time for the monastic or chapter Mass. Just before this Mass a light breakfast (*mixtum*) of bread with a little beer or wine would be taken. The chapter Mass was followed by the office of Terce, three hours after sunrise, and then the monks would assemble for half an hour in the chapter house for spiritual instruction and correction from the abbot and for the discussion of monastic business. The various manual and intellectual tasks would then be done. At about 12 a.m. High Mass would be sung, this being the most important part of the monastic day, and after the Mass, at about 2 p.m., the principal meal (*cena*) would be taken. The Benedictine Rule forbade the eating of meat, and for the most part the monks ate bread, fish, eggs, and cheese. After dinner the office of None was sung, and then the afternoon was given over to manual labour and to study and the copying of manuscripts in the scriptorium and reading room, which were usually in the walk attached to the monastery church, this being partially screened against the weather and having the floor covered with straw. At 5 p.m. the Office of Vespers was sung and then a small supper was served before the last office of the monastic day, Compline. The monks retired a little before 7 p.m.<sup>1</sup>

It will be evident from this that study and scholarly research were very much a secondary concern of twelfth-century monastic life, and one wonders, indeed, how St. Anselm was able to find the time and opportunity to write so much while he was at Bec. One can only marvel at his intellectual stamina.

As for the actual course of studies pursued by the monks at Bec, we may surmise that it was constituted in roughly the same way as in the other great eleventh-century schools such as Fulbert's famous school at Chartres which was flourishing a little before Anselm's time.<sup>2</sup> Lanfranc, we have already noted, had established the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy) in

<sup>1</sup> See D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 1950, ch. xxvi, The Daily Life of the Monastery; also *The Constitutions of Lanfranc*, 1951, pp. xxxv-xxxvi for Lanfranc's monastic timetable based to some extent on the customs at Bec.

<sup>2</sup> On Fulbert (960-1021) and his successors at Chartres see A. Clerval, *Les Écoles de Chartres au moyen âge, du V<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Chartres, 1895, especially chs. ii and xiii. See also Loren C. MacKinney, *Bishop Fulbert and Education at the School of Chartres*, Notre Dame, U.S.A., 1957.

Normandy, and the subjects comprised by these two would have formed the backbone of the teaching at Bec. Particular emphasis would have been given to the study of grammar (or the mixture of logic and grammar that 'grammar' then was) which was held to be basic to the study of philosophy.<sup>1</sup> So St. Anselm, speaking of his own little logico-grammatical treatise, the *De Grammatico*, says that it was meant as an introduction to dialectics.<sup>2</sup>

We know also that great stress would have been placed on the study of dialectics or logic, and it is easy to see from St. Anselm's own writings that he had given close attention to those of Aristotle's logical works available to him through Boethius' translations and commentaries. Thus, Anselm refers to the *Categories*, the *Topics*, and the *De Interpretatione* of Aristotle, the so-called 'logica vetus', as well as to Boethius' commentary on the *Isagoge* of Porphyry (itself a commentary on Aristotle) and the same author's two commentaries on the *Categories*. Recent studies have shown to what an extent St. Anselm's thought was influenced by Aristotelian and Boethian logic, particularly in his use of the modal concepts of possibility and necessity which play so large a part in his thinking.<sup>3</sup>

The study of theology, mainly through the texts of the early Fathers, also occupied, of course, a central place in monastic studies. St. Augustine was given pride of place but, judging from the references in Anselm's own works, later writers such as Leo the Great and Gregory the Great were also closely studied. Certain of the Roman poets would also have been available (Ovid, Virgil, Horace), and a good selection of the historical

<sup>1</sup> See R. W. Hunt, 'Studies in Priscian in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in *MARS*, i, 1941, pp. 194-231: 'If we neglect grammatical theory, we are cutting ourselves off from an important source of understanding the thought of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At that time everyone had to study grammar and it was regarded as "the foundation and root of all teaching".' See also the important article 'Grammaire et théologie', by M. D. Chenu, in *La Théologie au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1957, pp. 90 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *De Veritate*, Praef.; Schmitt, i. 173. On the *De Grammatico* see D. P. Henry, 'Why "Grammaticus"?', in *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, xxviii, 1958, 165-80; and 'St. Anselm's "De Grammatico"', in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, x, 1960, 115-26.

<sup>3</sup> This recognition of the strongly 'Boethian' character of St. Anselm's thought is due above all to the work of D. P. Henry. In addition to the articles already cited see this author's 'St. Anselm on the Varieties of "Doing"', in *Theoria*, xix, 3, 178 ff.; 'The Prologion Proofs', in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, v, 1955, 147 ff.; 'St. Anselm's Nonsense', in *Mind*, lxxii, 1963, 51-60; 'The Scope of the Logic of St. Anselm', in *L'Homme et son destin d'après les penseurs du moyen âge*, Louvain-Paris, 1960, pp. 377-83.

and philosophical writings of classical Roman authors, Cicero, Seneca the Stoic, Pliny the Elder, Caesar, and others. The rudiments of civil and canon law would also have been studied.<sup>1</sup> It is well to remember that eleventh- and twelfth-century libraries were on quite a small scale. Thus we know that early in the twelfth century Bec had a library of one hundred and sixty-four volumes, while Monte Cassino had at the same time about seventy volumes.<sup>2</sup>

Some idea of how scarce books were and how much valued can be gathered from certain of the instructions laid down by Lanfranc for the monks at Christ Church, Canterbury. On the Monday after the first Sunday in Lent, Lanfranc writes: 'Before the brethren go into chapter the librarian should have all the books save those that were given out for reading the previous year collected on a carpet in the chapter house: last year's books should be carried in by those who have had them, and they are to be warned by the librarian in chapter the previous day of this. . . . When each hears his name read out he shall return the book which was given him to read, and anyone who is conscious that he has not read in full the book he received shall confess his fault prostrate and ask for pardon. Then the aforesaid librarian shall give to each of the brethren another book to read.'<sup>3</sup>

At all events under Anselm's guidance Bec became the foremost intellectual centre in Europe, attracting students from Italy and other countries. Eadmer lays great stress on the gentleness and kindness of Anselm's dealings with his monks and students and he gives us a number of stories—Anselm personally

<sup>1</sup> D. P. Henry has remarked the echoes of Roman law distinctions in the *De Potestate* . . . ; see his 'St. Anselm on Scriptural Analysis', in *Sophia* (Australia), vol. i, no. 3, 1962, pp. 8-15; and 'St. Anselm and Paulus' in *Law Quarterly Review*, lxxix, 1963, 30-31.

<sup>2</sup> See J. W. Thompson, *The Medieval Library*, Chicago, 1939, 239-41, on Bec. Also Léon Maître, *Les Écoles épiscopales et monastiques avant les universités (768-1180)*, Ligugé-Paris, 1924: for an analysis of certain eleventh- and twelfth-century libraries, including Bec, see pp. 179-86. See also Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, p. 37; and the same author's *The Normans in European History*, 1919, pp. 178-80, for an analysis of the one hundred and thirteen books bequeathed to Bec by Philip, Bishop of Bayeux. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, pp. 522-7, points out that from 1150 onwards most of the important Benedictine Houses had quite large libraries. In 1170 Christ Church had 600 volumes, Durham had 400, and in 1202 Rochester had 300. See also for further details J. de Ghellinck, art. 'Bibliothèques' in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, i, 1604.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Knowles, *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, p. 19.



attending a young monk when ill, or rebuking a fellow abbot for his harshness towards his monks, or weeping at the memory of a dead monk dear to him—which present the saint in a very charming and attractive light. This side of his character is brought out very well in the remarkable prayer composed by Anselm, in which he addresses Christ as a mother. ‘And Thou, Jesus, dear Lord, art Thou not a mother too? . . . Indeed Thou art, and the mother of all mothers, who didst taste death in Thy longing to bring forth children unto life.’<sup>1</sup>

But beneath the gentleness and charm Anselm had great toughness of mind and will, and in his tempestuous dealings with William Rufus and Henry I after his election to the see of Canterbury, as well as in his forceful policy to secure the primacy of Canterbury, he showed himself a shrewd and competent statesman, despite his own conventional disclaimers of any interest in public affairs or of any aptitude for playing politics.<sup>2</sup>

In 1078 Anselm, already a well-known and universally respected figure, visited his old master Lanfranc, who had become Archbishop of Canterbury at the Conquest. Anselm made a very favourable impression in England, and when Lanfranc died in 1089 Anselm was the obvious choice as his successor. William Rufus, however, was anxious to plunder as much of the Canterbury revenues as possible and kept the see vacant for four years, so that it was not until 1093 that it was offered to Anselm. At first Anselm refused on the ground that, as a monk and scholar, he was unfitted to engage in secular affairs, particularly with a ruler such as William Rufus. However, in a fantastic scene which Eadmer has described for us, the English bishops thrust the archiepiscopal staff between Anselm’s fingers and dragged him by force to the church to be inducted into the office. Anselm finally agreed after laying down

<sup>1</sup> *Oratio* 10; Schmitt, iii. 40. On Anselm’s prayers and meditations see A. Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin*, Paris, 1932; also the same author’s introduction to *Méditations et prières de saint Anselme*, Paris-Maredsous, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> See *Epist.* 3; Schmitt, iii. 254. R. W. Southern, *St. Anselm and his Biographer*, on the other hand, makes much of St. Anselm’s supposed political ineptitude. However, as Southern himself admits, Anselm did have a measure of success in clarifying the old Norman feudal confusion between the spiritual and temporal spheres, as well as in his own policy of securing the primacy of Canterbury, in which he was prepared even to oppose the Pope.

a number of conditions which William Rufus reluctantly accepted. So on the 25th September 1093 Anselm was enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury, and there began his long and violent relationship with William Rufus.

William seems to have combined the virtues of an American gangster with those of a South American dictator; as one writer puts it, 'from the moral standpoint he was probably the worst king that has occupied the throne of England'.<sup>1</sup> It was not, however, so much his personal vices that brought him into contact with Anselm as his maintenance and exaggeration of the tradition of William the Conqueror (and of the Norman dukes before the Conqueror), according to which ministers of the Church were subjects in the strict sense of the temporal ruler and bound to pay feudal fealty. This tradition was, moreover, supported by a considerable body of theory purporting to justify royal supremacy over the bishops.<sup>2</sup> According to Eadmer, William the Conqueror 'would not suffer anyone settled in the whole of his dominions to receive the Bishop of Rome as apostolic Pope unless at his command, or to receive letters of the Pope on any account if they had not previously been shown to him'. The King, Eadmer goes on, 'did not permit the Primate of his kingdom, that is to say the Archbishop of Canterbury, if he assembled and presided over a council general of his bishops, to enact or forbid anything, except what was agreeable to his will and had been previously ordained by him'.<sup>3</sup>

Lanfranc had in practice accepted William's strict control of the Church and seems to have acquiesced in his rejection of papal interference in Norman affairs, though it has to be remembered that the Conqueror had used his power with discretion and had, for instance, been instrumental in reforming the Norman episcopacy and the clergy in general. Anselm, however, was a moderate supporter of the policies of Pope Gregory VII (elected in 1073), who was determined to assert

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, Oxford, 1951, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> See G. H. Williams, *The Norman Anonymous of York, 1100 A.D.*, in the series *Harvard Theological Studies*, xviii, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Nov.*, in *Rolls Series*, lxxxi. 9. See also F. N. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1947, p. 667; and also D. Knowles, 'Religious Life and Organization' in the collection *Medieval England*, vol. ii, ed. A. L. Poole, Oxford, 1958, p. 391; cf. Cantor, *Church, Kingship and Lay Investiture*, pp. 29-31.

the 'liberty of the Church' (as against the confusion between the temporal and spiritual orders that was the legacy of the Carolingian compromise) *vis-à-vis* the power of the temporal ruler. In practice this meant rejecting the feudal right claimed by medieval rulers to invest bishops with their badges of office and to demand their submission as subjects.<sup>1</sup> Pope Urban II, Anselm's contemporary, carried on this policy and, as we have noted, Anselm gave it his support in England. Anselm's own interpretation of his position in relation to the King is expressed very clearly in a passage reported by Eadmer: 'The plough (which must cultivate the fields of the Lord) in England is drawn and directed by two oxen superior to all others, the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the former by the exercise of justice, the latter by teaching divine doctrine and by the exercise of the magisterium.'<sup>2</sup> Père Congar, in a magisterial essay, sums up Anselm's position in the following words: 'The great motive inspiring St. Anselm was that which had animated the reform movement for fifty years before Anselm succeeded Lanfranc: *Libertas ecclesiae* . . . Anselm shared the fundamental conviction of the men of the reform: the Church is not a creature of the King, it does not belong to him, it is not of his *dominium*. It is the Church of God; it is to Him that it belongs. And, from this point of view, it is for all the faithful, including Kings, a mother.'<sup>3</sup>

Congar has also drawn attention to the parallelism in the twelfth century between the movement towards the recognition of the proper autonomy of the temporal and spiritual orders with respect to each other, and the movement towards recognition of the autonomy of the spheres of faith and reason with respect to each other. However, although Anselm saw, more clearly than Lanfranc and many of his contemporaries, the distinction between the temporal and spiritual provinces, he did not have the idea of the 'State' as a separate and auto-

<sup>1</sup> For the Gregorian reform see A. Fliche, *La Réforme Grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne (1057-1123)*, tome viii, in the series *Histoire de l'église* . . . , ed. A. Fliche and V. Martin, Paris, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Nov.*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Y. Congar, 'L'Église chez saint Anselme', in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 371-99. See also Anselm's words upon his departure for Rome in 1097, Eadmer, *Vita*, II. xxi; Southern, p. 93: 'I go indeed willingly trusting in God's mercy, that my journey will do something for the liberty of the Church in future times.'

nomous power that was to be developed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Nor did he have the clear and well-defined view of the autonomy of 'reason' and philosophy (as against that of the realm of 'faith' and theology) that was also to be developed later.<sup>1</sup>

Once committed to this policy of securing the liberty of the Church St. Anselm opposed the King's right to invest bishops of the Church with their insignia, in the most intransigent way. As he put it in one of his letters: 'It is not I who prohibit the King from conferring investitures, but having heard the Apostolic (the Pope) in a great council, excommunicate all those who give or receive lay investitures, I have no wish to hold communion with excommunicates or to become an excommunicate myself.'<sup>2</sup> Anselm held to this position tenaciously and refused to accept the pallium, the symbol of papal ratification of his office, from William. Further, in 1097 he insisted on going to Rome without the King's permission, and so, according to William, forfeited his archbishopric and became an exile. In Rome Anselm was received with extravagant respect by Urban II, who spoke of him as the 'pope and patriarch of another region',<sup>3</sup> and who gave him the place of honour at the Council of Bari in 1098 and at the Easter Council in Rome in 1099. It was during his stay in Rome that Anselm finished his major theological work, the *Cur Deus Homo*. Urban II, however, refused to take direct action against William in support of Anselm's claims, and, somewhat disappointed, Anselm retired to Lyons to stay with the Archbishop Hugh he mentions in the preface to the *Proslogion*. In 1100, the third year of Anselm's exile, William Rufus was killed, and the new king, Henry I, invited Anselm to return to his see. The old quarrel, however, broke out again almost immediately when Henry demanded feudal submission from Anselm. Once again Anselm refused and was supported strongly by the new pope, Paschal II. After another journey to Rome in 1103 Anselm was once more exiled. In 1105, however, Paschal II excommunicated Henry's chief adviser, and Anselm threatened to impose the same

<sup>1</sup> From this point of view Congar's conclusion goes too far: *op. cit.*, p. 396, 'The consistency of the natural order, on the dual plane of Reason and of the State, is thus, for Anselm, a fact, a datum.'

<sup>2</sup> *Epist.* 327; Schmitt, v. 258.

<sup>3</sup> Eadmer, *Vita*, II. xxix; Southern, p. 105.

sentence upon Henry. Henry thereupon showed that he was willing to come to some kind of compromise over the whole question, and in 1107 an agreement was reached between him and Anselm, Henry giving up his claim that feudal homage should be exacted from a bishop-elect before his consecration. Just what was gained by each side is open to question. It is possible to see the result of the compromise as a victory for Anselm and the right of the Church against the temporal power; thus Dean Church, in his old but excellent book on Anselm, concludes: 'By the surrender of the significant ceremony of delivering the bishopric by the emblematic staff and ring, it was emphatically put on record that the spiritual powers of the bishop were not the king's to give; the prescription of feudalism was broken; a correction was visibly given to the confused but dangerous notions in which that generation had been brought up.' On the other hand, it is possible to see the agreement of 1107 as a victory for Henry and for the lay powers generally.<sup>1</sup>

What is remarkable is that, during this time of alarms and excursions, Anselm managed to keep up his scholarly work. In fact between 1092 and 1102 Anselm produced the *De Incarnatione Verbi*, his great and central theological work the *Cur Deus Homo*, the *De Conceptu Virginali*, the *Meditatio Redemptionis Humanae*, and the *De Processione Spiritus Sancti*. In other words more than half the bulk of Anselm's writing was done after he had become Archbishop of Canterbury.

We know little in detail of the last years of Anselm's life. Nor unfortunately do we know a great deal about the very interesting school of disciples that he gathered about him while he was at Canterbury; Eadmer, Ralph, Gilbert Crispin, Baldwin, Alexander, Elmer, the beloved Boso, and the mysterious Honorius Augustodunensis.<sup>2</sup>

As we have already remarked St. Anselm's writings had very little influence immediately after his death, and in the years until the beginning of the thirteenth century they are rarely

<sup>1</sup> Church, *St. Anselm*, p. 342. Cf. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, p. 181: 'The comment of Hugh the Chanter that by the surrender of the right of investiture the king had lost little or nothing, a little perhaps in royal dignity, nothing at all in power, seems to be fair estimate of the result of the six years' contest.'

<sup>2</sup> See Southern, *St. Anselm and his Biographer*, ch. v.

cited or discussed. In the middle of the twelfth century the thought of Achard of St. Victor certainly shows an Anselmian impress, but, apart from him, Anselm is merely mentioned by Abelard and John of Cornwall, and the rest is largely silence. It is, in fact, not until the thirteenth century that the 'Philosophus Christi' (Henry of Huntingdon's splendid name for Anselm) comes to be taken seriously. In 1215 Philip the Chancellor was discussing St. Anselm's views on free will at the University of Paris, and by 1240 the 'quasi-official reign of the theologian of Bec had clearly entered its glorious phase'.<sup>1</sup> That, however, was some 100 years after St. Anselm's death.

St. Anselm died on the Wednesday before Easter, 21st April 1109, in his seventy-sixth year and in the sixteenth year of his archiepiscopal reign. Eadmer has a charming story about the saint's death which we may use to bring this summary account of his life and times to a conclusion: 'When Palm Sunday dawned we were sitting around his bed as usual. One of our number said to him: "Father and Lord, as far as it is given to us to know, you are leaving this world and going to keep the Easter Court with your Lord." He replied: "If it is His will I shall gladly obey, but if He should prefer me to stay with you just long enough to solve the question of the origin of the soul which I have been turning over in my mind, I would gratefully accept the chance, for I doubt whether anybody else will solve it when I am gone."' <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. de Ghellinck, *Le mouvement théologique du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 85. The above details are taken from de Ghellinck.

<sup>2</sup> *Vita*, II, lxvi; Southern, p. 141.

## ST. ANSELM'S SYSTEM

### 1. *The Character of St. Anselm's Thought*

WE cannot hope to understand the *Proslogion* and its argument without knowing something of St. Anselm's thought in general and above all of how he conceived of the relationship between knowledge through religious faith and knowledge through unaided philosophical reason. The difficulty, however, is that Anselm himself was not concerned formally and explicitly to demarcate the realm of faith and theology from the realm of reason and philosophy, assigning to each its respective 'formal object' and distinguishing the proper method of each, in the manner of Aquinas and the thirteenth-century thinkers. We may, no doubt, distinguish between certain philosophico-theological questions that interested Anselm—questions such as the existence and attributes of God, the freedom of the will, the nature of truth, and so on—and properly theological questions such as the nature of the Trinity and the motive for the Incarnation, with which he was also concerned. But Anselm, like St. Augustine, did not explicitly make such a distinction; for him faith and reason were both parts of what we may call Christian wisdom, just as in the social sphere the Church and the temporal power were both parts of 'Christendom' for the men of his time.

✓ Questions that forced themselves on Aquinas and his contemporaries (for example, concerning the way in which 'natural reason' functions in the sphere of theology, and the proper demarcation of the realms of faith and reason) simply did not occur to St. Anselm, and we cannot expect him to be answering questions that he did not, and in a sense could not, put to himself. Anselm's ideas on this whole question are in an uncrystallized state and we can be suspicious *a priori* of any interpretation that offers a tidy and unambiguous explanation of his position on faith and reason.

At the same time it is legitimate and useful (though also a risky and delicate task) to analyse the virtualities or implicit intentions of St. Anselm's thought and to try to discern whether they lend themselves to development in one direction or

another. For example, we might ask whether, if St. Anselm were to return among us, he would recognize Aquinas and M. Gilson as his intellectual heirs; or whether, on the contrary, he would extend the right hand of fellowship to Professor Karl Barth; or whether, perhaps, he might deny his paternity to all three? It can be helpful to ask such hypothetical questions of St. Anselm, provided always that they are asked with tact.

Before we go on to consider St. Anselm's position on faith and reason we ought to say something about the general character or style of St. Anselm's thought. The primary influence upon his mind, as St. Anselm acknowledges, was that of St. Augustine. At the beginning of the *Monologion* he says that he does not wish to hold any doctrine that does not accord with the teaching of the Fathers of the Church 'and above all with the writings of St. Augustine'.<sup>1</sup> However, it would be a mistake to see St. Anselm simply as a servile plagiarist of St. Augustine, for, despite his declaration in the *Monologion*, he parts company with Augustine on several quite crucial points.<sup>2</sup> Again, as we shall see, Augustine's influence upon St. Anselm was crossed by a very strong logical and 'rationalist' strain, which he derives from Aristotle and Boethius.

From Augustine, together with Denys the Areopagite, and perhaps John Scotus Erigena, St. Anselm derived a general neo-Platonic 'world-view' characterized by a hierarchical conception of reality, where everything is graded or ordered according to different 'degrees of perfection',<sup>3</sup> and by an 'exemplarism', according to which created beings in the world derive their being and perfection by way of 'participation' in a Divine ideal or archetype or exemplar. And perhaps, though this is much more open to question, Anselm also shares something of the 'gnosticism' of the neo-Platonists, that is to say, their tendency to identify the end of philosophical speculation with the end of religious knowledge. John Scotus Erigena says, for example, that 'the true philosophy is the true religion and, inversely, the true religion is the true philosophy', and again

<sup>1</sup> *Monol.* i; Schmitt, i. 8. See F. J. Thonnard, 'Caractères augustinien de la méthode philosophique de saint Anselme', in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 171 ff.

<sup>2</sup> For example, on Augustine's theory of the 'rights of the devil' over mankind. See *Cur Deus Homo*, i. vii; Schmitt, ii. 56-57.

<sup>3</sup> *Monol.* iv; Schmitt, i. 17.



✓ 'no one enters into heaven save through philosophy'.<sup>1</sup> No doubt it would be over-facile to see Scotus Erigena as a 'gnostic' in the strict sense, but he certainly tends to hold that reason can bring us in the long run to what we believe by faith. And, as we shall see, there are hints and suggestions of the same kind in St. Anselm.

However, if St. Anselm's thought is neo-Platonic in this wide and general sense, it is not so in any more specific sense. Once again it is instructive to compare St. Anselm with John Scotus Erigena here. Erigena was a fully committed neo-Platonist, and following Denys he constructed a vast and intricate system incorporating the classical neo-Platonic theses—the doctrine of 'emanation', the ineffability of the divine One and the method of 'negative theology', the antithesis between the spiritual and material orders. But none of these particular neo-Platonic theses is exploited in St. Anselm's works. What is striking, indeed, is St. Anselm's lack of any really systematic metaphysics such as that of Erigena; or even of a theory of knowledge such as Augustine had attempted to develop. When, then, it is said that St. Anselm is a neo-Platonist, this can only be accepted in a very broad and general sense, and we ought not to make too much of this side of his thought.<sup>2</sup>

One can say, indeed, that it is not so much the neo-Platonic elements in St. Anselm's thought that give it its distinctive cast or style, but rather the dialectical or 'rationalist' strain that he derives from Aristotle and Boethius. This seemed to Lanfranc and others the novel (and dangerous) element in Anselm's

<sup>1</sup> *De Praedestinatione*, I. i; *Annotationes in Martianum*, 38, ii. Cited by Cappuyns, *Jean Scot Erigène, sa vie, son œuvre, sa pensée*, Louvain-Paris, 1933, pp. 303-5.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Koyré, *L'Idée de Dieu dans la philosophie de saint Anselme*, Paris, 1925. Koyré says, p. vii, that his object is to show 'the links which connect St. Anselm to St. Augustine and, through the medium of this latter, to Plotinus and to the neo-Platonic philosophy'; and, p. 60, 'We have the right to consider St. Anselm as a Plotinian'. See also C. Filliatre, *La Philosophie de saint Anselme*, Paris, 1920. Filliatre sees Anselm as continuing the tradition of Erigena and Proclus, and, beyond them, of the tradition of 'Christian gnosticism' represented by Clement of Alexandria, Justin, Origen, and Augustine. There is, in fact, a passage by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, vii. 57, that is curiously reminiscent of some of the things St. Anselm is to say later: 'Faith is, so to speak, an elementary and summary knowledge ("gnosis") of necessary things. "Gnosis" is a firm and stable demonstration of what has been received by faith. It is built up upon faith through the teaching of the Lord and passes into a state of intellectual surety and comprehension'; cited Y. Congar, art. 'Théologie', in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, xv, p. 348.

thought,<sup>1</sup> and it was this strain that became more and more pronounced in his thinking. It makes the *Cur Deus Homo*, for example, such an original work, and it is also significant that his last work, the *De Potestate*, was a severely logical treatise. The influence of Aristotle, or rather of Boethius' version of Aristotle, is everywhere evident in St. Anselm's works, and he is quite clearly within the 'dialectical' tradition that had been running an uneasy course during the half century before his time.

The conflicts in the early eleventh century between the 'dialecticians' and 'anti-dialecticians' were essentially conflicts between those who, on the one hand, saw theology as a matter of textual commentary and paraphrase of Scripture, and who wished 'not only to say nothing other, that is nothing different, from what is to be found in Scripture, but also to say nothing more';<sup>2</sup> and, on the other hand, those who saw the need for rational analysis and systematization of the various data of revelation. St. Peter Damian is a good example of an 'anti-dialectician' distrustful of admitting reason in matters of faith and anxious to minimize its use in theology. So, for instance, he says: 'Conclusions drawn from the arguments of dialecticians or rhetoricians ought not to be lightly applied to the mysteries of divine power; and as for the rules which perfect the use of the syllogism and the art of speech, let them cease to be obstinately opposed to the laws of God and to claim to impose the so-called necessities of their inferences on the divine power.'<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the 'dialecticians' could appeal to the authority of St. Augustine's acceptance of dialectics as a weapon against the errors of heretics,<sup>4</sup> and it would be quite wrong to think of the 'dialectical' tradition as being in some way heterodox. It was a misfortune that, in the famous debate between Berengar

<sup>1</sup> One can infer Lanfranc's attitude from a letter of Anselm, *Epist.* 77, Schmitt, iii. 199-200.

<sup>2</sup> Y. Congar, art. 'Théologie', p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> Cited by Jean Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien, ermite et homme de l'église*, Rome, 1960, p. 222. Leclercq points out, however, that Peter's position was in large measure a reaction against the excesses of the dialecticians of his time, and was also influenced by the fact that no systematic or autonomous body of philosophical knowledge as yet existed. See also J. Gonsette, *S. Pierre Damien et la culture profane*, Louvain, 1956, p. 60: 'Peter Damian does not absolutely deny the utility of dialectics in theology, but through lack of a systematic and coherent metaphysics is led to limit considerably its sphere of application.'

<sup>4</sup> *De Doctrina Christiana*, ii. 31; *P.L.* xxxiv. 57-58.

and Lanfranc, the 'dialecticians' were represented by such an inept thinker as Berengar seems to have been. Berengar had insisted that we should 'have recourse to dialectic in all things', for, as he continued, 'recourse to dialectic is recourse to reason, and he who does not avail himself of reason abandons his chief honour, since by virtue of reason he was made in the image of God'.<sup>1</sup> However, in this eulogy of reason, Berengar was simply exaggerating in a one-sided way a perfectly orthodox idea which had its origin in St. Augustine's dictum that God cannot despise reason since it is reason that makes man superior to everything else.<sup>2</sup> Later on, St. Anselm was to use exactly the same idea in the *Monologion*: 'since it is by the rational mind that man is most like God, it is by the mind that man knows God'.<sup>3</sup>

In the quarrel between 'dialecticians' and 'anti-dialecticians', then, St. Anselm was very much on the side of the former (despite Berengar), and it is important to remember this if we are to have a right view of St. Anselm's thought.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. *St. Anselm and St. Augustine*

We must now return to a more specific examination of St. Anselm's position on faith and reason in relation to that of St. Augustine. As we have already remarked, everyone acknowledges St. Anselm's dependence upon St. Augustine in this matter, but it is not always recognized that St. Augustine's own position on faith and reason is a very complex and even ambiguous one.

First of all, it is clear that for Augustine reason has a value of its own, independently of its help to faith, for by implanting reason in man God has made him superior to the rest of creation. In fact, we could not believe unless we had rational souls. And again, reason can persuade the mind to rise to faith. This function of reason is anterior to faith and is contrasted with another function of reason, posterior to the act of religious belief, seeking to understand what is believed by faith. As

<sup>1</sup> Cited by A. J. Macdonald, *Authority and Reason in the Early Middle Ages*, London, 1933, p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Epist.* 120; *P.L.* xxiii. 453. See also *Sermo* 126; *P.L.* xxxviii. 699.

<sup>3</sup> *Monol.* lxvi; Schmitt, i. 77.

<sup>4</sup> For a general survey of the 'dialectical' tradition see J. de Ghellinck, 'Dialectique et dogme aux X<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles', in *Festgabe Clemens Baeumker*, Münster, 1913.

Augustine puts it: 'So, therefore, if it is rational that faith precedes reason in the case of certain great matters which cannot be grasped, there cannot be the least doubt that reason which persuades us on this precept—that faith precedes reason—itself precedes faith.'<sup>1</sup> Again, St. Augustine concludes one of his sermons with the following words: 'Believe in Him whom you do not see, because of the things which you do see. And do not imagine that it is I alone who exhort you thus. Listen to what the Apostle says to you: "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world are made visible by the works He has made"' (Rom. i. 20).<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, St. Augustine also uses frequently the celebrated formula from Isaiah, 'nisi credideritis non intelligetis'. So, for example, he remarks at the end of another sermon: ✓ 'Understand my word in order to believe it; but believe the word of God in order to understand it.'<sup>3</sup> Here Augustine seems to distinguish between the 'word' of human reason approaching God independently of faith (where 'crede ut intelligas' does not apply), and the 'word' of God revealing truths about Himself not accessible to human reason (and here 'crede ut intelligas' does apply). Understood in this way 'crede ut intelligas' is restricted to the sphere of revealed truth and does not apply to the 'preambles' of faith (the existence and attributes of God), nor, *a fortiori*, to other truths available to human reason.<sup>4</sup>

It is also possible to interpret the Augustinian 'crede ut intelligas' in a wider sense. Thus it has been pointed out that for Augustine faith is not just a theoretical assent to revealed truths but rather 'a total and concrete adhesion of the soul'.<sup>5</sup> From this point of view we might say that, for Augustine, while

<sup>1</sup> *Epist.* 120; *P.L.* xxxiii. 453.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermo* 126; *P.L.* xxxviii. 699, '... God made you a rational animal ... and formed you in His own image. ... Therefore lift up your mind, use your eyes like a man, look at heaven and earth, look at the things that are made and look for the Maker; look at the things you see, and look for Him whom you do not see.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Ergo intellige, ut credas: crede, ut intelligas. ... Intellige ut credas verbum meum; crede ut intelligas verbum Dei': *Sermo* 43; *P.L.* xxxviii. 257-8. See also A. A. Cayré, *La Contemplation augustinienne*, Paris, 1954, ch. viii.

<sup>4</sup> It was, as we shall see later, in this way that the Augustinian formula was interpreted by twelfth-century thinkers later than St. Anselm—Gilbert de la Porrée and Simon of Tournai, for example.

<sup>5</sup> Cayré, *La Contemplation augustinienne*, p. 223.

reason enables us to give 'notional assent' (to use Newman's term) to certain truths about God, it is only through faith that we come to have a 'real assent' to those truths. 'Believe that you may understand' may then be paraphrased as: 'By believing and living, in the life of Christian faith, certain truths which can in themselves be known notionally by human reason, one comes to know them in a deeper and more vital or more real sense.'<sup>1</sup>

No doubt we must not force St. Augustine's ideas too much. For Augustine himself does not distinguish formally and explicitly between the different functions of 'understanding' in relation to faith. But we can at least say that, while he is anxious to safeguard the autonomy of faith by means of the 'crede ut intelligas' formula, he is equally anxious to affirm the possibility of rational speculation about God prior to and independently of faith in God. In his own theological practice St. Augustine does in fact devote a great deal of attention to what were later to be called the 'preambles' of faith, the possibility of knowing God as the ground of rational certitude, the nature of the soul, freedom of the will. There is, indeed, a strong 'rationalistic' strand in St. Augustine's thought; one has only to remember the labyrinthine discussion on the subject of time in the *Confessions*, and again, the Augustinian theory of 'illumination' can also be interpreted in a 'rationalistic' way, for according to the theory God is the source of illumination that makes possible knowledge equally of necessary rational truths and of truths of faith.<sup>2</sup> However, as we have already remarked, Augustine did not want to be a 'rationalist' denying the proper autonomy of faith, any more than he wanted to be a naïve fideist denying the autonomy of reason, and the strain represented by 'crede ut intelligas' and that by 'intellige ut credas' exist together in his thought in an unresolved or ambivalent state.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cayré, *ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. J. O'Meara, 'Augustine and neo-Platonism', in *Recherches augustiniennes*, vol. i, Paris, 1958, p. 102. 'Augustine considered in 386 that it was possible by reason alone to arrive at the truths revealed by authority, since God was the source of illumination for both co-ordinated though independent sources of knowledge.'

<sup>3</sup> See F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, London, 1950, ii. 48: 'It is not that Augustine failed to recognise, still less that he denied, the intellect's power of attaining truth without revelation; it is rather that he regarded Christian wisdom as one whole, that he tried to penetrate by his understanding the Christian faith and to

This same ambiguity is reflected also in the later Augustinian tradition. Thus, for example, Gregory the Great in his *Moralia* (written between 578 and 585), a work which strongly influenced St. Anselm, insists very firmly on the one hand upon the limited and negative character of our rational knowledge of God, and upon the need for revelation to enable us to know God in any positive way. At the same time, however, he can speak of 'reason' in the following terms: 'Holy Church in her teaching makes no demand on the ground of authority, but persuades by reason. So she says plainly that she is not believed because of authority, but her assertions are weighed by reason in order to discover whether they are true. Even when she makes an assertion which cannot be comprehended by reason, yet the advice given by her—namely that human reason ought not to pry into divine things—is rational advice.'<sup>1</sup>

Similarly with Erigena, although Erigena's Augustinianism is of a very hybrid kind, we find very much the same ambivalent view of faith and reason. We have already seen that in his *De Praedestinatione* Erigena writes as follows: 'Is the study of philosophy concerned with aught else save the exposition of the principles of true religion, which adores humbly and searches by reason for God, the supreme cause and source of all beings? It follows that true philosophy is true religion and, inversely, that true religion is true philosophy.'<sup>2</sup>

After St. Anselm, in the late twelfth century, these Augustinian ideas on faith and reason will be interpreted in a much more definite way, although the later interpretations do not represent a clean break with the older Augustinian tradition so much as a development of its implicit intentions or virtualities. Thus, for example, a younger contemporary of Anselm, Gilbert de la Porrée (1076–1154), distinguishes the realm of theology,

see the world and human life in the light of Christian wisdom. He knew quite well that rational arguments can be adduced for God's existence, for example, but it was not so much the mere intellectual assent to God's existence that interested him as the real assent, the positive adhesion of the will to God, and he knew that in the concrete such an adhesion requires divine grace.'

<sup>1</sup> *Moralia*, viii. 3. See the introduction to *Gregoire le Grand, 'Moralia sur Job'*, ed. Robert Gillet, in the series *Sources chrétiennes*, Paris, 1950. J. de Ghellinck, art. 'Bibliothèques', in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, i. 1604, remarks that Gregory's writings 'formed, together with those of St. Augustine, the mentality of the Middle Ages, both inside and outside the cloister'.

<sup>2</sup> Cited M. Cappuyns, *Jean Scot Erigène*, p. 302.



where faith is prior and reason secondary, and the realm of philosophy, where reason is prior; and a little later Simon of Tournai (c. 1190) echoes the same idea by saying: 'The teaching of Aristotle concerns those things about which understanding leads to faith ("ratio facit fidem"); but the teaching of Christ concerns those things about which faith leads to understanding ("fides facit rationem").'<sup>1</sup>

Even though these twelfth-century thinkers were later than St. Anselm, and were able to draw upon Aristotelian concepts that helped them to make a fairly precise distinction between the realms of faith and reason, they were, as we have just said, nevertheless simply prolonging and developing ideas that had been in the air some eighty years before, in St. Anselm's time.

This, then, was the tradition of thought about faith and reason that formed the context of St. Anselm's thinking on this question. We must now examine St. Anselm's own position.

### 3. *Faith and Reason in the Cur Deus Homo*

The best way to understand St. Anselm's position on faith and reason is to see how he himself used reason in matters of faith in his theological writings. Anselm's fundamental treatise, the *Cur Deus Homo*, is recognized by all to be the best example of his theological method, and it will be worth while examining that book in a little detail to see what, for him, is the office of reason in relation to faith. We might remark in parenthesis that, even though the *Cur Deus Homo* was written some seventeen years after the *Proslogion*, there is no reason to think that Anselm's position on faith and reason had changed or developed in any radical way in that period of time. Anselm did not begin writing his formal treatises until he was forty-three, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Expositio in Symbolum Quicumque*, cited by M. D. Chenu, *La Théologie comme science au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1957, pp. 35-36. For Gilbert de la Porrée see *In Librum Boëtii de praedicatione trium personarum*, P.L. lxiv. 1303-4. See also Alan of Lille (d. 1203), *De Planctu Naturae*, P.L. ccx. 446; 'Nature' is comparing herself with 'Theology': 'Ego ratione fidem, illa (Theologia) fide comparat rationem; ego (Natura) scio ut credam, illa (Theologia) credit ut sciât: ego consentio sciens, illa sentit consentiens.' On Alan see *Alain de Lille: Poète du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* by G. Raynaud de Lage, Paris, 1951, p. 168: It is 'an essential tendency of Alan of Lille's mind . . . to appeal to philosophical authorities owing nothing to Christianity in order to support a proof and to convince non-Christians'.

main lines of his thought seem to have been well and truly laid by then and to have remained constant.<sup>1</sup>

The *Cur Deus Homo* is concerned to show that man needs to be saved, and that salvation can only be effected by God's becoming man, so as to satisfy the 'debt' owed to God because of mankind's sin. As Boso, Anselm's partner in the dialogue, puts it, the question that the book is concerned with is 'why God became man in order to save mankind by His death, when it would appear that He could have effected this in some other way'.<sup>2</sup> St. Anselm begins by saying that he is addressing himself not only to Christian believers but also to unbelievers ('infideles') who hold that the Christian faith is 'repugnant to reason'. Because of this, he goes on, his discussion will abstract altogether from what we know about Christ by faith and through the scriptures, and will appeal only to 'necessary reasons' ('rationes necessariae') to prove that man can be saved only by Christ: 'Leaving Christ aside, just as though He never was, we shall prove by necessary arguments that it is impossible to be saved without Him.'<sup>3</sup>

The Christian, of course, will not need to be convinced by reason of the truth of the Incarnation and Redemption since he already believes this by (faith). All the same, however, the rational explanation of this truth will be useful to the believer in that it will enable him to penetrate more deeply into what he believes and, in addition, will give him a means to defend his faith against others.<sup>4</sup> Both believers and unbelievers, then, want an explanation of why God became man, but for different reasons. And Anselm clearly thinks that the same explanation will suffice for both; it will confirm the believer in his faith, on the one hand, and rationally convince the unbeliever of the truth of the Christian faith and of the necessity of believing in it. The unbelievers, he says, 'look for rational explanation because they do not believe, while we for our part do so because

<sup>1</sup> The *Cur Deus Homo* is in Schmitt, ii, and page references are to this edition. Another edition of the work, together with a translation into French and an excellent introduction, has recently been published by R. Roques, *Anselme de Cantorbéry: Pourquoi Dieu s'est fait homme*, in the series *Sources chrétiennes*, Paris, 1963. Roques's long introduction is by far the best available discussion of the *Cur Deus Homo*. See also J. McIntyre, *St. Anselm and his Critics: A Re-interpretation of the 'Cur Deus Homo'*, Edinburgh, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Bk. 11, ch. xviii; p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> Preface; 42.

<sup>4</sup> I. i; 47.



we believe; but the object of our search is one and the same'.<sup>1</sup> However, it remains true that it is primarily the needs of the unbeliever which dictate the supposedly purely rational method of investigation of the *Cur Deus Homo*, and that it is the unbeliever who is in view in most of the book. So, in the conclusion to the whole work, Boso does not mention the believer, but says instead that Anselm has satisfied 'by reason alone not only the Jews but also the pagans' that the Old and New Testaments are true.<sup>2</sup>

Who, may we ask, are these 'unbelievers' ('infideles') and 'pagans' ('pagani')? From what Anselm says, we may infer that the 'unbelievers' are those who do not accept all the assumptions that the Christian believer makes. In this sense the Jews are 'unbelievers', in that while accepting the Old Testament they do not accept the New Testament. The 'pagans', however, are unbelievers in a more radical sense in that they accept neither the Old nor the New Testament. In other words, they are those, atheists and others, who do not accept any of the articles of Christian revelation. They are those who have to be appealed to by reason alone ('sola ratione') and against whom we cannot appeal to any scriptural authority. St. Anselm certainly was aware of the objections of the atheist or religious sceptic, and it seems certain that in the *Cur Deus Homo* he had the sceptic in mind as well as the Jews.<sup>3</sup> The point is an important

<sup>1</sup> I. iii; 50. See also *Epist.* 136; Schmitt, iii. 280-1: 'Our faith ought to be defended by reason against those who ridicule it, but not against those who glory in the name of Christian. Regarding the latter, we may justly demand that they stand by the promise made in baptism; as for the former, they should be shown by rational means how irrationally they spurn us. However, the Christian ought to come to understanding through faith and not to faith through understanding, otherwise if he lacked understanding he would lose his faith.'

<sup>2</sup> II. xxii; 133. This conclusion of Boso seems to refute Roques's contention that Anselm's main purpose is to justify the hope of the believer: *Pourquoi Dieu* . . . , p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> J. de Ghellinck, *Le Mouvement théologique* . . . , p. 289, notes that in the commentary of Marius Victorinus on Cicero's *De Inventione* (written before Marius' conversion) there are sceptical attacks on the Virgin Birth of Christ and on the doctrine of the Resurrection. This commentary was widely used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and must have been known to St. Anselm. Roques claims, *Pourquoi Dieu* . . . , p. 72, that 'the "pagani" represent rather the Muslims', and, p. 91, that St. Anselm does not have in view 'the pagan pure and simple, nor the atheist'. Certainly there is evidence that in the twelfth century 'pagani' is used to signify the Muslims. Eadmer, for example, uses the term to describe the Arab troops of Count Roger of Sicily (*Vita*, II, xxxiii; Southern, p. III), and later writers such as Alan of Lille identify the 'pagani' and the 'Sarraceni' (see Raynaud de Lage, *Alain de Lille* . . . , pp. 12, 28). However, St. Anselm himself nowhere mentions the

one, for upon it depends how we are to appreciate Anselm's whole purpose in the *Cur Deus Homo*; that is, whether the explanations offered in the *Cur Deus Homo* are to be seen as 'necessary' only for those who already accept some or all of the religious (supra-rational) assumptions that the Christian makes, or whether they are to be seen as rationally 'necessary' or compelling in the strict sense. If, as we believe, St. Anselm intends his arguments to be convincing to those who do not accept any supernatural revelation at all, then this obviously implies that he did not think that the only office of reason regarding faith was to make explicit what was already known by faith, but that reason had a function anterior to and independent of faith.<sup>1</sup> ←

However, if St. Anselm wishes to reserve a place for reason independent of faith, he is at the same time equally concerned to emphasize the autonomy of faith. In other words, he wishes to say that faith is possible without any kind of prior rational preparation or justification. The Christian believer, as he constantly says, can (indeed must) believe before he understands. So, Boso says at the beginning of the *Cur Deus Homo* that 'right order' demands that we should believe first in the Christian mysteries before presuming to discuss them rationally, and he goes on to say, 'Even were I unable in any way to understand what I believe, still nothing could shake my constancy'. Here, then, far from being the basis of belief, reason seems to be relegated to a merely secondary role. If you believe, then reason can show that your belief is rational; but it is not

Muslims or identifies them with the 'pagani' or suggests that the latter, like the Jews, share some at least of the Christian's assumptions. Anselm mentions the 'pagani' in only two other places, in the *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* (Schmitt, ii; 10) and in the *Epistola de Sacrificio de Azymi* . . . (Schmitt, ii; 237). In both references the 'Iudaei' and the 'pagani' are mentioned as distinct categories of unbelievers, the inference being that while the Jews share part of Christian belief, namely that contained in the Old Testament, the 'pagani' share nothing and so must be approached by 'reason alone'. Anselm's use of 'paganus' is in fact quite traditional (see *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, Paris, 1937, xiii, 375-80), and his general position coincides with that proposed later by Aquinas in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* (I, ii).

<sup>1</sup> Roques, op. cit., p. 96, claims that St. Anselm is concerned principally to justify the faith of the believer, and then by showing 'the internal coherence of his faith' he persuades the unbeliever. However, St. Anselm is obviously concerned to show more than that the Christian faith is coherent or self-consistent; what he claims to prove is that it is true and necessarily so; see i. iv; 52. i. xxiv; 94. ii. xvi; 121.

formally because it is rational that you believe. As Boso puts it again, 'I have come not that you should remove doubts from my faith, but that you should show me the reasons for my certainty (of faith).'<sup>1</sup>

Within this context St. Anselm is concerned to emphasize the limits of reason in matters of faith. So he remarks, for instance, that though by reason we can know the necessity of the fact of the Incarnation, we do not know 'how' ('quomodo') it is necessary.<sup>2</sup> Again, in such a theological inquiry, Anselm says, 'Whatever a man might be able to say, the deeper reasons ('altiores rationes') of so important a fact are still hidden.'<sup>3</sup>

Here, then, we have the two sides to St. Anselm's thought. On the one hand, reason is allowed an independent function prior to faith, and, in some sense, reason can bring us to assent to the truths of faith. On the other hand, St. Anselm clearly acknowledges that faith is possible without any kind of prior rational preparation or justification, and that for the believer the only function of reason is to understand what is already believed. Clearly, as they stand, these two sides to St. Anselm's thought are not consistent, and some kind of distinction between the function of reason which brings us to faith and the function of reason which operates within faith would have to be made to make them consistent. However, like Augustine, St. Anselm does not have the categories with which to make this distinction clearly and unequivocally, and the two strains in his thought exist in an unresolved, uncrystallized state.

This ambiguity in Anselm's position is very strikingly brought out by an examination of his use of 'rationes necessariae' in the *Cur Deus Homo*. At times Anselm uses the expression to denote a strict, logically necessary, demonstration, that is to say, an argument whose premisses are certainly and indubitably true and whose conclusion follows with syllogistic necessity from them. 'Necessary reasons' in this sense leave no room for any doubts, and one would be a 'fool' ('insipiens') to deny such demonstrations.<sup>4</sup> Though Aristotle's treatises, *Prior Analytics* and *Posterior Analytics*, were not available to St. Anselm, he had, nevertheless, a clear idea of the notion of logical necessity<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. i; 48.

<sup>2</sup> I. xxv; 96.

<sup>3</sup> I. ii; 50.

<sup>4</sup> I. xxv; 95.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, II. xvii; 23, 'If something exists necessarily it is impossible for it not to exist, and if it is necessary for something not to exist it is impossible for it to exist, and conversely.'

and, as we have remarked, there seems to be no doubt that, on occasions at least, Anselm uses the notion of 'necessary reasons' in this strict sense to mean logically necessary arguments, in contrast with arguments of 'fittingness' ('convenientia') or probable arguments based upon analogy, which Boso says in the *Cur Deus Homo* are mere 'paintings upon clouds'.<sup>1</sup> One might say perhaps that it is when St. Anselm is anxious to stress the claims of reason that he thinks of 'necessary reasons' in this sense.

But Anselm also uses 'necessary reasons' in a much more general and looser sense than this. The notion of 'rationes necessariae' was probably known to St. Anselm through Cassiodorus, who distinguishes between an 'argumentum necessarium' and an 'argumentum probabile'. For Cassiodorus the main difference between the two is that a 'necessary argument' attains to the actual truth about a thing, so that one can say 'that is how the thing is', while a 'probable argument' is one which is neither true nor false but only likely or probable.<sup>2</sup> In this sense any true explanation of any fact will be 'necessary'. And Anselm, in fact, at times seems to use 'necessary reasons' in this sense, so that to ascribe a true rational justification of any kind to any thing or event is to show its 'necessity'.<sup>3</sup> As he makes clear in the opening passages of the *Cur Deus Homo*, what he is attempting to do is to show that there is a rational justification for the Incarnation and Redemption, as against those 'voluntarists', as we might call them, who argue that God could have saved man by a simple arbitrary act of the will. For Anselm God does nothing arbitrarily, but there is a reason for all His acts which we can find by rational investigation. We can never be satisfied with 'God so wills it' as a final explanation. One might, in fact, almost think that St. Anselm had someone like St. Peter Damian in mind, that is, a theologian who held that no limits could be set to the omnipotent will of God, with the consequence that the acts of God could never be really subject to rational inquiry.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. iv; 52.

<sup>2</sup> Cassiodorus, *De Artibus et disciplinis liberalium artium*, P.L. lxx. 1177. See the discussion of Cassiodorus' distinction by A. M. Jacquin, 'Les "Rationes necessariae" de saint Anselme', in *Mélanges Mandonnet*, Paris, 1930, ii. 67-78. There is also a reference to 'certas necessariasque rationes' in Augustine's *De duabus animabus contra Manichaeos*, xiv. 23. P.L. xlii. 110. <sup>3</sup> I. i; 48, 'ratione vel necessitate'.

<sup>4</sup> I. viii; 59, 'The will of God is never irrational'; see also I. xii; 70, 'It does not

Used in this loose sense 'necessary reasons' are no longer distinguished sharply from arguments of 'fittingness', and in certain passages in the *Cur Deus Homo* St. Anselm seems to suggest that an argument of 'fittingness' or an argument by analogy can in fact function as a 'necessary reason'.<sup>1</sup> Once again one might say that perhaps it is when St. Anselm is concerned to stress the supra-rationality of the articles of faith, and the autonomy of the order of faith in general, that he tends to use 'necessary reasons' in this loose or weak sense.<sup>2</sup>

These, then, are the two sides to St. Anselm's thought on faith and reason. If we stress the one side of his thought we can easily make St. Anselm into a rationalist for whom not only the 'preambles' or presuppositions of faith are rationally demonstrable, but also the mysteries of faith themselves.<sup>3</sup> On the

follow that if God wishes to lie, it is just to lie; rather it follows that that being is not God.'

<sup>1</sup> So, I. iv; 52, St. Anselm uses 'necessaria ratio' and 'decebat' as equivalents.

Again, II. viii; 104, Anselm says that the virgin birth of the God-Man is 'eminently fitting' ('valde convenit'), and Boso replies 'valde pulchrae et rationabiles sunt istae picturae'. See also the interesting discussion of 'convenientia' and 'necessitas' by Roques, op. cit., pp. 78 ff.

<sup>2</sup> After St. Anselm the notion of 'rationes necessariae' continues to be used. So Richard of St. Victor holds that we can have 'necessary reasons' for what we believe by faith: *De Trinitate*, I. 4; *P.L.* cxcvi. 892; and two hundred years after Anselm Duns Scotus cites both Anselm and Richard as 'authorities' for the position that we can have 'necessary reasons' about God. Scotus, however, distinguishes between what he calls 'evidently necessary' reasons, that is logically necessary truths whose denial would involve self-contradiction, and 'non-evidently necessary' propositions, that is propositions necessary in themselves but not logically necessary to us. And it is only in this latter sense that we can speak of 'rationes necessariae' applying to God. On Scotus see E. Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot*, pp. 340-1, and by the same author, 'Les Seize premiers theorematas et la pensée de Duns Scot', in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, xii, 1937, 61.

<sup>3</sup> Dom Cyprien Vagaggini in his magisterial 'La Hantise des "Rationes Necessariae" de saint Anselme dans la théologie des processions trinitaires de saint Thomas', in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 111-12, seems to suggest that, on the theoretical level at least, St. Anselm's categories do not allow him to differentiate between the mysteries of faith and what we know about God by reason. After noting that Anselm distinguishes between knowing *that* ('quia sint') there are three persons in God (provable by 'necessary reasons'), and knowing *how* ('quomodo sint') there are three persons in the divine nature (inaccessible to reason), Dom Vagaggini goes on to say: 'But when we try to find out what Anselm means by *quomodo sit* it is seen that for him this consists simply in the fact that the human intelligence never comes to have an exhaustive and direct knowledge of the Trinity, in the same way that it never comes to have a direct and exhaustive knowledge of the divine wisdom or the divine being. Thus one cannot prove that for St. Anselm the mystery of the Trinity is essentially greater than the mystery of the divine wisdom or being.'

other hand, if we stress the other side of Anselm's thought we can equally easily make him into a quasi-fideist maintaining that nothing can be known about God save on the basis of faith.<sup>1</sup>

However, as we have suggested above, St. Anselm does not want to exaggerate either the rationalistic side of his thought or the fideist side to the exclusion of the other. Like Bossuet in another connexion he wishes to hold 'les deux bouts de la chaîne' and to maintain both that reason has a role to play prior to faith and within the realm of faith, and also that faith transcends reason so that it cannot be on purely rational grounds that we believe in the mysteries of faith. After all, Anselm had extravagant examples of both rationalism (Berengar) and quasi-fideism (St. Peter Damian) before him to serve as a warning, and there is no doubt that he knew the dangers of exaggerating reason *vis-à-vis* faith, and faith *vis-à-vis* reason.

But it is also true that St. Anselm does not formally and explicitly distinguish the objects and methods of the two spheres of faith and reason, and there is no doubt that this lack of explicit formulation does lead him at times into confusion. Later on, the thirteenth-century Aristotelians will make a clear distinction between the role of reason prior to the act of faith, whose function it is to justify the 'preambles' of faith, and the role of reason in explicating the content of the theological mysteries. So, according to Aquinas, 'sacred doctrine makes a threefold use of philosophy. The first is to demonstrate those truths that are preambles of faith and that have a necessary place in the science of faith.' The second is 'to give a clearer notion, by certain similitudes, of the truths of faith . . .'. The third is 'to resist those who speak against the truth, either by

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, G. Leff, *Medieval Thought*, London, 1958, p. 99: 'St. Anselm's entire position rests upon the primacy of faith. We must recognize that, like St. Augustine, he allowed reason no independent validity. For both, reason was an instrument in demonstrating what was already believed: of itself it could not add to certitude, although it could give additional evidences of its truth.' R. McKeon, *Selections from Medieval Thinkers*, New York, 1929, i. 142, goes even further and quite fancifully makes faith, for Anselm, a prerequisite for any kind of knowledge at all. For Anselm he says, 'It is important that faith precedes understanding, since of the two sources of human knowledge, reason and faith, faith can exist without reason, but reason cannot exist without faith. In rational enquiry there must be a foundation of faith in the principles of the enquiry, and in the principles of the understanding itself.' See also E. Bréhier, *La Philosophie du moyen âge*, Paris, pp. 122-3; for St. Anselm, 'Holy Scripture is the authority on which all rational truths are based.'

showing that these statements are false, or by showing that they are not necessarily true'.<sup>1</sup> Here, on the one hand, the 'rationes necessariae' are confined to the sphere of the preambles of faith; and, on the other hand, the 'crede ut intelligas' formula is confined to the sphere of the mysteries of faith.

Anselm himself does not make such an explicit distinction between the two spheres, but all the same it is not too much to say that he is groping his way confusedly towards such a distinction. In fact, though we should not wish to make Anselm into a precocious Thomist, there are some interesting passages in his writings that hint at the kind of position Aquinas was later to adopt. In the *Cur Deus Homo*, for instance, St. Anselm admits that the theological mystery of the Incarnation goes beyond the powers of the human mind, but, he says, we can nevertheless show that 'higher reasons' are hidden in the mystery. Even though we do not know them, there are 'reasons' explaining the Incarnation, so that the Incarnation is not a wholly arbitrary and irrational action on the part of God. We can in this sense give 'some reason' for the Incarnation, so that the appropriate attitude before a theological mystery is not one of reasonless silence; or, in other words, if the Incarnation is supra-rational, it is not thereby irrational. 'You will', says St. Anselm, 'be more able to prove that higher reasons are implicit in this (mystery of the Incarnation) if you show some reason for it than if, by saying nothing, you prove that there is no reason in it to comprehend.'<sup>2</sup> He seems to be making very much the same point in the *Monologion*,<sup>3</sup> where, apropos the Trinity, he says, 'Though this truth is inexplicable it demands belief.' And, he goes on, 'One who is investigating an incomprehensible object ought to be satisfied if his reasoning shall have brought him far enough to recognize that this object most certainly exists', even though he cannot explain it. In other words, we can explain *that* there are three persons in God even if we cannot explain *how* this can be.<sup>4</sup> Then in the next chapter of the *Monologion* Anselm raises the important question as to how we

<sup>1</sup> In *Boëtium de Trinitate*, IX. ii. 4. See Chenu, *La Théologie comme science au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, on pre-Thomist positions; and Y. Congar, art. 'Théologie', 382 ff.

<sup>2</sup> II. xvi; 117.

<sup>3</sup> lxiv; 75.

<sup>4</sup> '... etiamsi penetrare nequeat intellectu quomodo ita sit'.

may speak about God at all. If I use words in their ordinary everyday sense—as I must if I am to be understood—how can they adequately express anything about God (who is, by definition, above and beyond anything within our everyday experience)? How, in other words, can ordinary language be used to describe an extraordinary being such as God is? Anselm answers that we cannot speak of God directly and as He is in Himself, but we can speak of Him by way of analogies and images ('per aliquam similitudinem aut imaginem'). This knowledge of God is indirect since we know Him through something other than Him and we do not see Him as He is in Himself. But, for all that, this knowledge is of some value. If this knowledge is not the whole truth it is not therefore false. As Anselm puts it, 'This (divine) nature is ineffable since it is inexpressible by words or any other means; but any indirect knowledge of it based on reasoning and having, as it were, the character of a reflection is not therefore false'.<sup>1</sup>

Incomplete and confused and undeveloped as his ideas are then, Anselm is feeling his way tentatively towards the theory of analogy that plays a central role in Aquinas's theology, and in general towards the distinction between the proper spheres of faith and reason which Aquinas and the other thirteenth-century Aristotelians were to make so clearly. But unfortunately Anselm simply did not have the concepts and distinctions available to make his intentions clear. He was thinking at a time before the introduction of the whole Aristotelian philosophical corpus and he did not have a complete conception of what 'natural reason' or philosophy was capable of, what it comprehended, and what its boundaries were. 'Reason' for Anselm could not have precisely the same meaning and the same resonances as it had for the thirteenth-century philosophers. For Anselm, again, it was difficult to make a precise distinction between the sphere of theology and that of philosophy because he was not acquainted with the Aristotelian conception of 'science' ('scientia') with all its elements—material and formal objects, the role of 'principles', the notion of 'subalternation', &c.—which was to be such a potent instrument of clarification (and sometimes of mystification!) in the hands of the thirteenth-century thinkers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.; 77.

<sup>2</sup> On this see Chenu, *La Théologie comme science* . . . .



St. Anselm, then, was unable to express clearly and distinctly what he wanted or intended to say about the relations between faith and reason. However, what his intentions were in this matter are now sufficiently clear; and for our purposes here what is important is that one of the things St. Anselm intended to say was that reason was to some extent capable of understanding God and the things of God prior to faith and independently of faith. The relevance of this conclusion for a right appreciation of the *Proslogion* will be obvious.

#### 4. *Karl Barth's St. Anselm*

Our conclusion, that St. Anselm implicitly allows the possibility of a rational approach to God, logically prior to and independent of a properly theological approach, has the misfortune directly to contradict the view of St. Anselm's system proposed by the celebrated Swiss theologian, Karl Barth.<sup>1</sup> And Barth's interpretation of St. Anselm is so persuasive and has been so influential that we must give some consideration to it.

For Barth, Anselm allows no place of any kind for 'philosophical theology', prior to and independent of faith and concerned with establishing the 'credibility' of faith. The task of the theologian is not to justify in any way the articles of faith but, as Barth says, to investigate the 'how' of the articles of faith; in other words, reason operates within the context of faith and always presupposes faith. 'A science of faith', so Barth says, 'which denied or even questioned the faith (the Credo of the Church) would ipso facto cease to be either "faithful" or "scientific".'<sup>2</sup> The only knowledge of God is that of faith given as a grace by God, so that unaided reason is powerless in this realm. 'For Anselm right knowledge is conditioned by the prevenient and co-operating grace of God. This general consideration and also the fact that this grace must ever be sought by prayer already imply that the ultimate and decisive capacity for the *intellectus fidei* does not belong to human reason acting on its own but has always to be bestowed on human reason.'<sup>3</sup> For Anselm to allow reason any justificatory office in this realm would be in effect to 'create a substitute for the knowledge of faith', and would mean that man has 'some kind of power of

<sup>1</sup> See his *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, English trans., 1960.

<sup>2</sup> p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> p. 57.

his subjective *ratio* existing from creation and not obliterated by the Fall'.<sup>1</sup> It is, then, only if the unbeliever is prepared to grant the Christian theologian's premisses that any communication between them is possible. 'It would have been quite impossible', Barth concludes, 'for Anselm to write a *Summa Theologica* as well as a *Summa Contra Gentiles*; a volume of Dogmatics as well as a Philosophy of Religion or the like.'<sup>2</sup>

It is within this general context, Barth goes on to argue, that the *Proslogion* argument must be appreciated. The *Proslogion* argument is not meant to be a rational proof of the existence of God, of the same kind as Aquinas's 'five ways', for example. The major premiss of the *Proslogion* argument is a datum of a faith and valid only within the context of faith, and the aim of the argument is not in any way to demonstrate the existence of God to the unbeliever by unaided reason. The aim of the *Proslogion* is rather to explicate all that is implicitly contained in one of the revealed 'names' of God, that is, God named as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', implying that we are prohibited from thinking that there is anything greater than He. 'Should the creature fail to hear this Name of God and the prohibition it contains then that can only mean that he has not yet understood the Creator as such nor himself as creature. It is in faith that he understands Him and himself within this relation and so hears His Name and the prohibition against conceiving anything greater than He.'<sup>3</sup>

This, then, is Barth's interpretation of St. Anselm's position, an interpretation which makes Anselm into a fideist of a very rigorous kind—in fact, into a precocious Barthian. Now, what is to be said of Barth's view? First of all, we may say that Barth's interpretation is too good and too consistent to be true, for it supposes that Anselm had, as it were, faced the question of the relationship between faith and reason and had resolved it unequivocally in a neo-Barthian way. However, as we have already seen, if we approach St. Anselm's texts prepared to take the confusions and unresolved ambiguities in his position as they occur, without trying to explain them away, then we cannot interpret Anselm either as a rationalist, or as a fideist, or, for that matter, either as a neo-Thomist or as a neo-Barthian. The most we can say is that his thought lends itself, so to speak, to a

<sup>1</sup> p. 71.<sup>2</sup> p. 67.<sup>3</sup> p. 153.

development in one direction rather than another, and, as we have seen, the evidence suggests that, if anything, a development in the direction of Aquinas's position would do least violence to St. Anselm's intentions.

Second, the obvious objection to Barth's interpretation is that it seems to disregard Anselm's own professed theological aim. In the *Cur Deus Homo*, as we have seen, Anselm declares his purpose to be to convince the unbeliever 'by reason alone' ('sola ratione'). As Boso puts it, 'In proving necessarily that God became man, leaving aside what is in the Bible—namely, about the Three Persons in God and about Adam—you convince not only the Jews, but also the pagans by reason alone.'<sup>1</sup> Again, in his reply to Gaunilo, Anselm explicitly distinguishes between the appeal his proof will have to the believer on the one hand, and to the unbeliever on the other hand. If the believer ('Catholicus') alleges that it is not evident that the formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' has a sense, then we may appeal to his 'faith and conscience'.<sup>2</sup> However, if the unbeliever alleges this, we cannot appeal to his faith, but we can nevertheless use rational means to show him that the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful one. As Anselm puts it, 'There is, then, a way by which one can get an idea of "that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought." In this way . . . the Fool, who does not accept the sacred authority [of Revelation] can be easily refuted if he denies that he can form an idea from other things of "that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be thought"'.<sup>3</sup>

St. Anselm's counter-reply to Gaunilo represents, in fact, the crucial objection to Barth's whole interpretation. For, if Barth is correct, then Gaunilo's criticisms of the *Proslogion* must rest upon a 'sheer misunderstanding'<sup>4</sup> of Anselm's point and purpose in that work. In other words, on Barth's interpretation, Gaunilo's attack is not simply invalid or inconclusive but rather

<sup>1</sup> II. xxii; 133. See also Eadmer's account of Anselm's intention in the *Monologion*: 'Fecit quoque libellum unum quem *Monologion* appellavit. Solus enim in eo et secum loquitur, ac, tacita omni auctoritate Divinae Scripturae, quid Deus sit sola ratione quaerit et invenit, et quod vera fides de Deo sentit invincibili ratione sic nec aliter esse posse probat et astruit.' *Vita*, I. xlx; Southern, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *The Author's Reply to Gaunilo*, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

wholly irrelevant and pointless, for Gaunilo, in criticizing the *Proslogion* argument as a rational argument for the existence of God, is in fact criticizing it for something which St. Anselm never intended it to be. However, if Barth sees Gaunilo's attack as being a complete misunderstanding of St. Anselm's position, this is certainly not the way in which St. Anselm himself sees it. In his reply to Gaunilo he does not, in fact, anywhere complain that Gaunilo's criticisms are irrelevant or beside the point, but he confronts Gaunilo's objections on Gaunilo's own ground and attempts to show that they are invalid. In short, what is obvious in St. Anselm's counter-reply is that he agrees completely with Gaunilo's reading of the *Proslogion* argument as a rational proof of the existence of God.

These objections to Barth's interpretation of St. Anselm are reinforced by circumstantial evidence of an historical kind. First, as we have noted, Anselm saw himself as a follower of St. Augustine and his thought is in fact impregnated with Augustinian ideas and themes. Now, as our discussion showed, although St. Augustine's position on faith and reason is not a clear-cut one, it is nevertheless not a fideist position, nor a position identical with that which Barth wishes to read into St. Anselm. If Barth's interpretation is correct, then St. Anselm must have been breaking, in a pretty radical way, with St. Augustine and the whole Augustinian tradition on this question. But of course there is not the slightest evidence to suppose that St. Anselm was consciously parting company with St. Augustine, nor that Anselm's contemporaries saw him as an innovator on this question of the relationship of faith to reason.<sup>1</sup> In fact, his contemporaries saw him as the pillar of orthodoxy. So, for example, at the Council of Bari (1098) Anselm was given pride of place by the Pope. If, then, Barth's interpretation is correct, Anselm's neo-Barthianism was accepted without demur by the whole of the early twelfth-century Church, from Pope Urban II

<sup>1</sup> For Lanfranc, indeed, St. Anselm was something of a theological innovator, but for reasons quite contrary to those proposed by Barth. For Lanfranc it was St. Anselm's emphasis on 'reason' and his neglect of 'authorities' which represented a new, and perhaps dangerous, departure; see on this Anselm's *Epist.* 77; Schmitt, iii; 199-200. See also William of Malmesbury's later testimony, *De Gestis Pontificum*, Rolls Series, lii. 76. For William it was Anselm's appeal to reason and rational argument, where others had appealed merely to the credulity of their audience, that was his main claim to fame.

downwards! Oddly, and ironically, the view of theology that Barth wants to read into St. Anselm is displayed in a very pure form in the anti-Aristotelian movement in the early years of the thirteenth century. One of the most notable representatives of this movement was Pope Gregory IX, the author of the celebrated warning (in 1228), to the theological masters at the University of Paris about the dangers of introducing Aristotelian philosophy into Christian theology. 'The "*intellectus theologicus*"', Gregory wrote, 'must not be corrupted by an earthly ferment, that is by philosophy. To introduce philosophical reason into the heart of faith is to make faith useless and senseless and to deprive it of all merit.'<sup>1</sup>

Again, in our discussion of St. Augustine's position, we saw that there is a strong rationalistic side to his thought, and this 'rationalism' is reinforced in St. Anselm by the profound influence that Aristotelian and Boethian logic had upon him. As St. Anselm puts it in the *Monologion*, it is by his reason that man is 'the image of God',<sup>2</sup> and as we remarked, this is a commonplace in the later Augustinian tradition. From this point of view Barth's reading of the Lutheran doctrine, that reason is completely corrupted by the Fall, into St. Anselm does violence both to the history of eleventh- and twelfth-century thought and to St. Anselm.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, a study of the writings of Anselm's own immediate disciples, Rodulfus and Gilbert Crispin, shows quite clearly that they did not interpret their master's thought in a fideist or neo-Barthian way. In fact, if anything, they accentuated the rationalistic side of St. Anselm's thought. Thus, in his *Disputatio Christiani cum Gentile de Fide Christi*,<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Crispin describes a debate at a kind of philosophical society which met in London at an inn.<sup>5</sup> A Christian engages in a discussion with

<sup>1</sup> Text in Chenu, *La Théologie comme science au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> lvi; 77.

<sup>3</sup> More generally, Barth's whole conception of St. Anselm's approach to theology is equally questionable. See the excellent studies of J. McIntyre, *St. Anselm and his Critics*, and the essay, 'Premises and Conclusions in the System of St. Anselm's Theology', in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 95-101.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. C. C. J. Webb, in *MARS*, iii, 1954, 58-77.

<sup>5</sup> C. C. J. Webb rather romantically sees this as evidence of an underground movement of freethinkers in London: *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, Oxford, 1915, pp. 94 ff. R. W. Southern, however, interprets Gilbert's dialogue as an allegory where 'Christianus' is meant to represent St. Anselm himself.

an unbeliever over the credibility and rationality of the Christian faith and they both agree to leave aside all appeal to the authority of the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Gilbert (and this is confirmed by the further course of the dialogue) clearly acknowledges the possibility of a rational 'apologetic' of the Christian faith.

The same 'rationalistic' strain emerges in the work of another disciple of St. Anselm, Rodulfus. For instance, in his dialogue between 'Peccator' and 'Ratio', Rodulfus declares that 'those who live according to reason rightly advance upon the right road, and if they make their way always with reason they will come finally into the company of the saints'.<sup>2</sup> Again, in his dialogue between 'Sciens' and 'Nesciens', Rodulfus elaborates a causal proof of the existence of a First Cause of life. The proof is constructed independently of faith in order to persuade 'Nesciens' who doubts whether God exists inasmuch as one cannot believe anything which cannot be seen with one's own eyes.<sup>3</sup>

To sum up: If Barth's interpretation of St. Anselm's position on faith and reason is correct, St. Anselm must have been out of step with the whole Augustinian tradition of his own time; he must have been misunderstood and misrepresented by his contemporaries, including his own close disciples; and finally St. Anselm himself must have been unaware of the revolutionary character of his own views. We conclude then that, even though Barth's view of St. Anselm contains many valuable insights, his interpretation must be rejected. In other words, St. Anselm cannot be interpreted as having denied in principle the possibility of a 'natural theology', a rational approach to God, logically prior to and independent of faith.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Omittamus igitur Scripturarum nostrarum auctoritatem', Webb, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Again, he says, 'God indeed is supreme reason and in Him exists the sure source of all reasons': cited, R. W. Southern, *MARS*, i, 1941, 14, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Libellus primus de nesciente et sciente*, cited Webb, *MARS*, iii, 1954, 59.

<sup>4</sup> This conclusion also goes against Gilson's interpretation of St. Anselm's thought. 'In so far as philosophy for us means an investigation which starts from rational premisses in order to end in rational conclusions it can be said that St. Anselm did not write a single work of philosophy': *Études de philosophie médiévale*, Strasbourg, 1921, p. 14. As against Gilson, H. Bouillard, *Spic. Bec.*, p. 206, has this to say: 'The *Proslogion* proof, discovered within faith in order to support faith does present a theological aspect; but because it is meant to work independently of faith, it also has a philosophical character.' Dom M. Cappeluyens, 'L'Argument de saint Anselme' in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, vi, 1934, 313-30, also holds that Anselm intended the *Proslogion* argument as a rational demonstration valid even for the religious unbeliever.

Once again, it is obvious what importance this conclusion has if we are to interpret the *Proslogion* according to the intention of its author. In the *Proslogion*, as in the *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm addresses both believers and unbelievers. For the believer the proofs Anselm offers will enable him to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of the Godhead and to understand what he believes; but for the unbeliever the proofs will serve to convince him of the existence of God and give him understanding so that he may come to believe.

# PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENTARY



## PROSLOGION

### PREFACE

ST. ANSELM begins the Preface to the *Proslogion* by mentioning his earlier work, the *Monologion* (written one year before the *Proslogion*), where he had attempted to prove the existence of a being which is 'the best and greatest and highest of all things'.<sup>1</sup> We can, he says, prove this by reason alone ('sola ratione') and in many different ways. St. Anselm, however, offers to present the most easily understood proof based on the fact that there are many good things, a fact evident from sense experience and from intellectual apprehension. Things may, as compared with each other, be equally good or more or less good, but the fact that they are good means that they are nevertheless the *same* in this respect. Now, that diverse things are the same in being good implies that they are good 'through something'.<sup>2</sup> In a later chapter Anselm explains that for a thing to be 'through something' means that it has come to be through an efficient cause or a material cause or through an instrumental cause.<sup>3</sup>

It seems proper, then, to interpret St. Anselm's argument here as meaning that diverse things that are the same in some respect are caused to be the same in that respect by something extrinsic to them, and this cause possesses the characteristic in question 'through itself' ('per se'). Thus there is something good 'through itself', and all the other diverse things that are good are good through it. There is, then, so Anselm concludes, a being that is in the highest degree good and great, and that is the most supreme being.<sup>4</sup>

This proof, Anselm says, began from the fact that there are many good things, but the concept of goodness is not at all necessary to the proof, which may be generalized to prove

<sup>1</sup> i; Schmitt, i. 13. On the *Monologion* see the interesting, but debatable, study by P. Vignaux, 'Structure et sens du *Monologion*', in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, xxxi, 1947, 192-212. See also F. S. Schmitt, 'Les Corrections de saint Anselme à son *Monologion*', in *Revue Bénédictine*, l, 1938, 194-205.

<sup>2</sup> i; 14.

<sup>3</sup> vi; 19. 'Quod enim dicitur esse per aliquid, videtur esse aut per efficiens aut per materiam aut per aliquod aliud adiumentum, velut per instrumentum.' See also ch. vii, where it is made clear that things exist 'through' God by way of creation 'ex nihilo'.

<sup>4</sup> i; 15.

that whatever exists, exists through some one thing. Anselm apparently treats existence as an ordinary characteristic so that all the diverse things that exist, though they exist in different ways, are the same in this respect, namely, that they exist. And that they are the same must be explained by positing the existence of some one thing which, existing through itself, is the cause of existence in other things. As Anselm puts it: 'Everything which exists exists either through something or through nothing. But nothing exists through nothing. For it cannot be thought that something should not exist through something. Whatever exists, therefore, does not exist save through something.'<sup>1</sup>

Now this being through which all other beings exist must be either one or more than one. If more than one then they would be the same in respect of existing through themselves or being existents 'per se', and we should have to postulate some one being through which these existents 'per se' would derive their same existence 'per se'. Therefore we must postulate the existence of one being which, existing through itself, is the ground of the existence of all other things. And, finally, since what exists 'through itself' is greater than what exists 'through another' (or, as we might put it, whatever exists independently is greater than what exists dependently), this being is greater than all others ('maxime omnium est') and hence 'the best and greatest and highest of all things'.<sup>2</sup>

In the following chapter of the *Monologion* Anselm sets out a further argument (though it is difficult to see whether he intends it as an independent proof, or simply as a fuller explication of the reasoning behind the proof just considered), namely that, if diverse things are the same in some respect, they must be caused to be the same in that respect by something extrinsic to them. When we inspect the things in the world, Anselm says, and compare them with each other we see that there are grades of excellence among them. For example, a horse is intrinsically more excellent than a tree, and a man intrinsically more excellent than a horse.<sup>3</sup> We can, then, arrange things in a

<sup>1</sup> iii; 15-16. 'Omne namque quod est aut est per aliquid aut per nihil. Sed nihil est per nihil. Non enim vel cogitari potest, ut sit aliquid non per aliquid. Quidquid est igitur, non nisi per aliquid est.'

<sup>2</sup> iii; 16.

<sup>3</sup> iv; 16-17.

hierarchical series according to their degree of excellence. Now, if there were no thing of the highest grade of excellence (such that it had nothing higher than it), then the series would be infinite; in other words, no grade of excellence would be so superior that it itself had no superior. But this would mean that there would be an infinity of natural things. But this is absurd. Therefore there must necessarily exist a thing of such a superior grade of excellence that nothing could be superior to it. The conclusion of this proof might suggest that the most excellent thing must itself be a member (albeit the highest member) of the hierarchical series. However, in a later chapter<sup>1</sup> Anselm remarks that relative expressions do not apply properly to the supreme being, so that when we say that God is the 'highest' of all things or 'greater' than others, we do not mean 'highest' or 'greater' to be taken relatively to other things. As he puts it: 'If none of those things existed, in relation to which it (the supreme being) is called supreme or greater, it would not be conceived as either supreme or greater, yet it would not, therefore, be less good or suffer detriment to its essential greatness in any degree.'<sup>1</sup> God, therefore, does not exist as the highest member of the hierarchical series, but rather *outside* the series. However, the difficulty for Anselm then is that the positing of a thing so superior to all others that it itself has no superior will not suffice to stop the series of things going on *ad infinitum*; for the only thing that would stop this would be for the series to have a last or highest member *within* the series.

One can see in this *Monologion* argument, with its notion of a being so superior to all others that a superior to it cannot exist, how close Anselm is to the definition that he exploits in the *Proslogion*, namely, 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'. The *Monologion* formula, however, is the conclusion of the proof and gets its sense and meaning from the proof, whereas in the *Proslogion* the definition is rather assumed as a premiss. Again, as we shall see, the *Proslogion* formula is much more sophisticated and subtle than that used in the *Monologion*.

These, then, are the arguments which Anselm sets out in the *Monologion*. Interesting as they are, and illuminating as they are for the interpretation of the *Proslogion* arguments, it is obvious enough that they are only as valid as the naïve

<sup>1</sup> xv; 28.

Platonic thesis on which they hinge, namely, that if diverse things are the same in some respect they must be caused to be the same in that respect by something extrinsic to them, which latter must have the property in question 'through itself', or in a pure form, or to an absolute degree. For St. Anselm, however, the only drawback of the arguments is their complexity, in that they depend upon a number of premisses which in turn need explanation and justification. In themselves, St. Anselm considers, they are quite valid and conclusive.<sup>1</sup>

We may return now to the *Proslogion*. Anselm goes on to describe how he began to speculate on the possibility of a single and self-sufficient argument to establish the same conclusion as was reached by the more complex *Monologion* arguments.<sup>2</sup>

'Argument' ('argumentum') for St. Anselm can mean both a single premiss in a train of reasoning or the train of reasoning considered as a whole. However, it seems clear that here St. Anselm means it in the latter sense for, as we shall see, the proof he develops in the *Proslogion* is a formal deductive argument with a number of premisses. St. Anselm nowhere pretends, as is sometimes alleged, that the existence of God is self-evident in the strict sense, that is, in the sense that the proposition 'God (that than which nothing greater can be thought) exists', is seen immediately to be self-evident in that its denial would be self-contradictory.

Anselm also intimates here that the beauty of his new proof is that it serves to prove the attributes of God as well as His existence, whereas in the *Monologion* the attributes had to be proved by invoking the additional principle that we must attribute to the 'supreme nature' whatever it is better to be rather than not be.<sup>3</sup> In the *Proslogion* this principle is seen to be a corollary of the definition 'God is that than which nothing greater can be thought'.

<sup>1</sup> Barth alleges that the *Monologion* proofs are not meant to be independent rational proofs of the existence of God: 'My view is then that even in the *Monologion* we are confronted by a very pronounced rejection of speculation that does not respect the incomprehensibility of the reality of the objects of faith; by a recognition of the indirectness of all knowledge of God, and also, though more clearly than in the *Proslogion*, by the reference to the Pattern of faith which is the basis of everything.' *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> 'Unum argumentum, quod nullo alio ad se probandum quam se solo indigeret': Preface, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Monol.* xv; 28.

Anselm goes on to describe the obsessive hold that his project came to have upon his mind. And Eadmer relates that while he was reflecting upon the problem he gave up 'food, drink and sleep' and became so exercised by it that it even began to interfere with his religious duties. Anselm had, indeed, begun to wonder if the whole pursuit were not a temptation of the Devil when, 'to his great joy and jubilation', the solution dawned upon him one evening between the night offices.<sup>1</sup> Eadmer also tells a curious story that St. Anselm wrote the argument down quickly on wax tablets and gave them to one of the monks in the monastery to mind for him. The monk, however, lost the tablets, but, fortunately, Anselm was able to remember his text and to write it down again. Very trustingly he gave the tablets again to the same monk, who this time found them broken. Anselm then decided, for safety's sake, to write the argument down on parchment.

The title of the work, Anselm says, is 'Faith in Search of Understanding' ('fides quaerens intellectum'), which is, of course, an Augustinian echo. The name 'Proslogion', which means 'an allocution', is merely a short and convenient title. Since we have already examined at some length what Anselm means by 'faith in search of understanding' we need not consider it further here.

Anselm dedicates the *Proslogion* to Archbishop Hugh of Lyons, a close friend with whom he stayed while he was in exile after his quarrel with William Rufus. From what we know of Hugh, or Hugh de Die, it appears that he was a relative of the Duke of Burgundy; he was appointed papal legate in 1075 and Archbishop of Lyons in 1083. A fervent supporter of the Gregorian reforms, he also seems to have been a man of extreme rigidity since Gregory VII had to overrule some of his decisions.<sup>2</sup>

#### CHAPTER I

St. Anselm begins the *Proslogion* proper with a prayer-like introduction. Written in a heightened oratorical style,<sup>3</sup> it is

<sup>1</sup> *Vita*, I. xix; Southern, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Fliche, *La Réforme Grégorienne*, in *Histoire de l'Église*, viii. 205-6; Rule in his introduction to Eadmer's *De Vita Sancti Anselmi* . . . has a fanciful account of the relations between Hugh and Anselm.

<sup>3</sup> 'Un style un peu abondant', as Dom Wilmart says of St. Anselm's prayers, *Méditations et prières de saint Anselme*, p. lxi.

closely modelled upon St. Augustine; indeed, the introduction is largely a tessellation of themes from the Psalms and St. Augustine. Man seeks to know God, but God is inaccessible to him, both because of God's transcendence, and because the human mind has been weakened by the effects of the Fall. We must pray to God then, if we are to come to know God. Echoing St. Augustine, St. Anselm addresses God: 'Teach me to seek You, and show Yourself to him who seeks You, because I can neither seek You if You do not teach me how, nor find You unless You show Yourself.' And he ends with the Augustinian formula which we have already discussed at some length: 'I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand.'<sup>1</sup>

As we suggested before, it would be misleading to place too much stress upon these Augustinian commonplaces and to exaggerate the 'fideist' tendency of what Anselm says here. It has been alleged, for example, that St. Anselm means that the *Proslogion* proof, in contrast with the *Monologion* proofs, is based upon faith, or 'Christian experience', which presupposes God's grace.<sup>2</sup> However, for Anselm himself the only difference between the *Monologion* proofs and the *Proslogion* argument is that the latter is not as logically complex as the former. Whereas the *Monologion* proofs were 'composed of a chain of many arguments', the *Proslogion* argument is intended to be 'one single argument which for its proof requires no other save itself'.<sup>3</sup> St. Anselm says nothing at all about the *Proslogion* proof having a radically different *point de départ* from that of the *Monologion* arguments.

## CHAPTER II

We believe by faith that God exists and that He has a certain nature. In other words, we believe, as theists and Christians, that God is a being so great that no greater being than He can be thought of or conceived. Now, can we show by rational

<sup>1</sup> p. 115. Cf. St. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, II. ii; *P.L.* xxxii. 1242.

<sup>2</sup> 'This (*Proslogion*) proof differed from the three of the *Monologion* in starting from faith; and it must be understood as deriving from Christian experience. Its validity, from Anselm's point of view, did not rest upon its verification by objective tests, but solely upon the knowledge which came through God's illumination. . . . Such knowledge of God, therefore, presupposes grace.' G. Leff, *Medieval Thought*, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> p. 103.

means that what we believe by faith can be understood? That is to say, can we show by rational means that God, defined as 'something than which nothing greater can be thought', really exists? There is no doubt that St. Anselm has in mind here St. Augustine's discussion of the existence of God in his *De Libero Arbitrio*, and it will help to illuminate St. Anselm's meaning if we examine what Augustine has to say.

In the *De Libero Arbitrio* Augustine is engaged in a discussion with Evodius and he asks him whether he is certain that God exists. Evodius answers that he does not directly know that God exists, but rather *believes* it, and Augustine remarks: 'If then one of those fools of whom Scripture writes, "The fool said in his heart: there is no God", should say this to you, and should refuse to believe with you what you believe, but wished to know whether your belief is true, would you have nothing to do with this man, or would you think he ought to be convinced in some way of what you hold firmly—especially if he should seriously wish to know it and not obstinately to oppose it?'<sup>1</sup> Evodius replies that it is sufficient to appeal to the testimony of 'all those writers who have testified that they lived with the Son of God'. Augustine agrees that, in a sense, we must believe in God in order to understand Him, but he then proceeds to develop a purely rational and independent proof of the existence of God which is apparently meant to be convincing to the unbeliever. Reason, he argues, is the supreme element in man, but reason apprehends the existence of eternal and unchangeable truth. Now, if there is anything higher than eternal truth it is God; but if there is not, then truth itself is God. Augustine concludes his argument by saying to Evodius, 'If I showed there was something above our minds, you conceded you would confess it to be God, provided there was nothing still higher. Accepting your admission I said it was enough that I should show this. For if there is something more excellent, it is this which is God, but, if there is nothing more excellent, then truth itself is God. Whichever is the case, you cannot deny that God exists.'<sup>2</sup> In other words, God is defined as the 'highest' and 'most excellent' thing that we can conceive, so that to prove the existence of a highest and most excellent conceivable thing

<sup>1</sup> *De Lib. Arbit.* II. ii, sec. 5; trans. M. Pontifex, *The Problem of Free Choice*, London, 1955, pp. 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* II. xv; Pontifex, p. 120.

(eternal truth) is precisely to prove the existence of God.<sup>1</sup> Augustine concludes that, even though we know God only in a very tenuous way by rational means, we still do know Him. 'God exists, and He exists truly and supremely. We not only hold this, I think, by our undoubted faith, but we also attain to it by a sure, though very tenuous, kind of knowledge.'<sup>2</sup>

St. Augustine, then, clearly admits the possibility of a rational justification of belief in God and, since St. Anselm professes to follow Augustine so closely, we may conclude that his intention in the *Proslogion* is precisely the same as that of his master in the *De Libero Arbitrio*. In other words Anselm's intention is to prove that God, defined as that than which nothing greater can be thought, can be shown by rational means (appreciable by the unbeliever) to exist.

'We believe', says St. Anselm addressing God, 'that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought' ('aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest').<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that the immediate source of this formula is, as we have just seen, to be found in St. Augustine, though of course the general notion of God as a being so supremely great that there cannot conceivably be a greater than He is part and parcel of Judaeo-Christian theism.<sup>4</sup> But, we may ask, what is the basis of this definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'? St. Anselm says that we 'believe' that God is definable in this

<sup>1</sup> Pontifex, p. 262, expresses the difference between St. Augustine and St. Anselm thus: 'St. Anselm argues that we can conceive of that than which nothing greater can be conceived; that than which nothing greater can be conceived must have existence or it would have something still greater than itself, and therefore that God must exist. St. Augustine, it is true, agrees that God must be greater than anything we can conceive, but he does not argue that therefore God must exist: he sets out to show that such a being must exist because we are aware of truth.' Again, we might add, St. Augustine's argument is a causal argument of a kind, whereas, as we shall see later, St. Anselm's argument is non-causal in form.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. II. xv; Pontifex, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Anselm uses several variants of this formula: 'id quo maius cogitari nequit'; 'aliquid quo maius cogitari non valet', &c.

<sup>4</sup> See St. Augustine, *Confessions*, VII, c. iv: 'Neque enim ulla anima umquam potuit poteritve cogitare aliquid, quod sit te melius, qui summum et optimum bonum es' (P.L. xxxii. 735). Also see *De Moribus Manichaeorum*, I. II, c. xi, where God is defined as a being 'quo esse aut cogitari melius nihil possit' (P.L. xxxii. 1355). For other references see Schmitt, I. p. 102. Schmitt also remarks an interesting anticipation of the formula in Seneca, *Naturales quaestiones*, I, Praef. 13: 'Quid est deus? mens universi, quod vides totum et quod non vides totum, sic demum magnitudo illi sua redditur, qua nihil maius cogitari potest, si solus est omnia, si opus suum et intra et extra tenet.'



way, but he cannot mean, as it has sometimes been claimed, that the definition is only appreciable by one who has faith, so that the whole *Proslogion* argument, which of course hinges upon the definition, would only be persuasive for those who already believed in God. There is, in fact, enough historical evidence to show that St. Anselm would have been well aware of the position of the philosophical atheist. Thus, as we have seen, his English disciple Rodulfus has a dialogue where 'Nesciens', representing the unbeliever, declares that he refuses to believe anything that he cannot see with his eyes.<sup>1</sup> And another disciple, Gilbert Crispin, begins one of his works by saying that it is aimed at 'those who do not believe to exist what they do not see to be capable of existing'.<sup>2</sup>

We do, then, *believe* that God is 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' and we can assume that, for the believer, this formula is meaningful; but, as Anselm shows later in his reply to Gaunilo, a rational or philosophical sense can be given to the definition so that it is meaningful also to the unbeliever.<sup>3</sup> Here, in Chapter II, however, St. Anselm supposes that the formula is quasi-self-evident and needs no special justification. His argument is indeed directed at the unbeliever, but at the kind of unbeliever who, while admitting that he knows what it would be like for God to exist, denies that God does in fact exist. In other words, Anselm's argument, at least in Chapter II of the *Proslogion*, is directed against what we might call the 'factual atheist', rather than against the 'logical atheist' who argues that the very notion of God, no matter how defined, is a strictly meaningless one, so that we do not even know what it would be like for God to exist.

Anselm comments later<sup>4</sup> that the exact formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is important if his

<sup>1</sup> *Libellus primus de nesciente et sciente*, cited Webb, in *MARS*, iii, 1954, 59: 'Sunt autem multi homines etiam Christiani moribus et vita fere similes bestiis qui etiam hoc ipsum utrum deus sit dubitant, nec aliud quam qui oculis videntur esse existimant.'

<sup>2</sup> Cited by R. W. Southern, 'St. Anselm and his English Pupils', in *MARS*, i, 1941, 20. Southern comments as follows: 'It is not without significance that Anselm's pupils were so much concerned with the problem of unbelief. . . . Gilbert Crispin, by the strenuousness and scrupulousness of his discussion, best reveals the gravity of the conflict and shows that the enemy was not an imaginary being from whom there was nothing to fear.'

<sup>3</sup> *The Author's Reply*, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-81.

argument is to work. 'That than which nothing greater can be thought', he says, is not equivalent to the notion of the 'greater than all' ('maius omnibus'), for we cannot show that the proposition 'the greater than all does not exist' is self-contradictory as evidently as we can with the proposition 'that than which nothing greater can be thought does not exist'. However, reserving a closer examination of the formula until later, let us briefly expose the argument which Anselm constructs around it.

The notion of God, defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', is understandable or meaningful, and in this sense it exists 'in the mind' ('in intellectu'). Now, what exists in actual reality ('in re') is distinct from what merely exists in the mind. It is one thing for a picture to be thought of or be in the mind of the painter, and another thing for it actually to exist after the painter has painted it. And, more importantly, what exists in actual reality is 'greater' than what exists in the mind alone. God defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' must therefore exist in actual reality, for if He did not so exist, but merely existed in the mind, He would not be precisely 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', since it would be possible to think of a greater, namely, something than which nothing greater can be thought existing in actual reality as well as in the mind.

It is important to notice that this is an argument or train of reasoning involving several premisses and that St. Anselm is not pretending that the proposition 'that than which nothing greater can be thought actually exists' is an analytic proposition such that its denial would be immediately self-contradictory. The denial of this proposition only becomes self-contradictory *on the supposition* that what actually exists is greater than what merely exists in the mind. Unless we suppose this latter premiss there is no self-contradiction involved in the proposition 'that than which nothing greater can be thought does not actually exist'.

Aquinas is plainly wrong, then, when he interprets St. Anselm as claiming that the proposition 'God exists' is self-evident ('per se notum').<sup>1</sup> It has been claimed that Aquinas was

<sup>1</sup> *Sum. Cont. Gent.* i. x. Aquinas refers to those 'qui asserunt quod Deum esse per se notum est, ita quod eius contrarium cogitari non possit, et sic Deum esse

not considering Anselm's proof as such but rather later formulations of it. However, Aquinas obviously knew of Anselm's *Proslogion* argument at first hand and he nowhere bothers to distinguish the formulation of it that he rejects from St. Anselm's own formulation. We may suppose, then, that he thought that his criticisms of it were fatal to St. Anselm's proof as such.<sup>1</sup>

If, however, the *Proslogion* argument is a real argument, there is no doubt that for Anselm the premisses of it were so evident that it would be impossible not to be convinced by it. If one admits that God is definable as that than which nothing greater can be thought, and if one admits the obvious premiss that what exists in actual reality is greater than what exists in the mind alone, then, under pain of self-contradiction, one cannot but conclude that God must actually exist. Or, put in another way, the proposition 'God does not actually exist' is seen to be self-contradictory on the assumption that God is defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' and on the further assumption that it is greater to exist in reality than in the mind alone. Or, again, if the notion of 'God' defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful one then, granted that it is greater to exist in reality than to exist in the mind alone, it must be true or instantiated; or, if it is possible that God ('that than which nothing greater can be thought') exists, then, granted that it is greater to exist actually than merely possibly, God actually exists.

This, then, is the extremely elegant and ingenious argument that Anselm proposes, and we must now examine more closely the elements from which it is composed. What, first of all, is

demonstrari non potest', and he goes on to give a summarized version of the proofs in Chapters II and III of the *Proslogion*. Gilson admits that the *Proslogion* argument is not the analytic proposition that Aquinas makes it out to be, but the reason he gives for this is that the proof presupposes 'purification of the heart, faith, an appeal to God, illumination of thought by grace' (*Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien*, Paris, 1930, p. 218). This 'fideist' interpretation of St. Anselm, as we have seen, cannot be maintained. In any case, it is principally because the *Proslogion* argument is formally and logically an argument that the proposition 'God exists' is not for Anselm 'per se notum' or analytic or self-evident.

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas mentions St. Anselm by name in two earlier discussions: *De Veritate*, q. 10, art. 12; *Comm. in Sent.* I. i, dist. 3, q. I, art. 2. For an interesting comparison of Anselm's argument with Aquinas's 'five ways' see E. L. Mascall, 'Faith and Reason: Anselm and Aquinas', in *Journal of Theological Studies*, xiv, 1963, 67-90.

to be said of the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'? As we have seen, St. Anselm supposes that we are able to conceive of a being so great that nothing greater than it could be conceived. Of course we cannot have a determinate or positive conception of such a being, but we can, for all that, still form some conception of the greatest conceivable being.<sup>1</sup> Now, what is the sense of 'greater' as it is used in the Anselmian formula? It is obvious that it is not being used in any quantitative sense, but rather as meaning 'more perfect' in the neo-Platonic sense, that is to say, having a higher level or 'degree' of existence. In his reply to Gaunilo Anselm uses 'greater' interchangeably with 'better'; for example, supra-temporal things are said to be metaphysically 'greater' and 'better' than temporal things.<sup>2</sup> And, as we have already seen in the *Monologion*, St. Anselm claims that a horse is 'more perfect' than a tree and that a man is 'more perfect' than a horse. For St. Anselm this whole neo-Platonic notion of metaphysical 'perfections' was so familiar and so seemingly self-evident that it needed no justification. However, for the modern thinker the notion of a 'perfection' is a puzzling one and not at all self-evident. We can obviously compare things *in particular respects*; for example, we can say that in respect of strength a horse is greater or more perfect than a man, but that in respect of intelligence a man is greater or better or more perfect than a horse. But can we say that *absolutely speaking* a man is greater or better or more perfect than a horse, in that he has a 'higher degree' of being or existence? Of course, if there were a relation of *causal dependence* between the things compared, then perhaps it would be possible to give a meaning to the notion of 'greater' or 'more perfect' used in this metaphysical sense. For example, if we established that things of finite

<sup>1</sup> *The Author's Reply*, p. 189. As Koyré notes, St. Anselm does not suppose, as Descartes does, that we have a 'clear and distinct' idea of the essence of God. 'It is only in seeing the impossibility of denying this existence (of God) that we come to posit it. That, in our view, is the great difference between the Anselmian proof and that of Descartes' (*L'Idée de Dieu dans la philosophie de saint Anselme*, p. 201).

<sup>2</sup> p. 187. Wyclif has an interesting variation of Anselm's argument based upon the scholastic doctrine of the 'convertibility' of being and goodness. Because God is 'summe ens' He is also 'summe bonum' ('since anything has as much goodness as it has being and vice versa'), and since it is 'more good' to exist 'in re et in intellectu', than merely 'in intellectu', God must, *because He is the 'summe bonum'*, exist 'in re et in intellectu'. See *Johannes Wyclif: Summa de Ente*, ed. Thomson, pp. 78-79.

temporal duration were causally dependent upon things of infinite temporal duration (as in Aristotle's *Physics* sub-lunar things are dependent upon the movers of the spheres); or that temporal things (whether finite or infinite) were dependent upon supra-temporal things (as in Aristotle's universe the temporal universe is causally dependent upon the supra-temporal Prime Mover); or again that contingent existents were causally dependent upon a necessary existent—then we could perhaps compare these things in an absolute sense and speak of one being 'greater' or 'more perfect' than another.<sup>1</sup> In other words, if we had first proved the existence of God as the ultimate *cause* of the existents in the world, then we could certainly say that God was the greatest conceivable being.

The notion of 'greater' or 'more perfect' may, then, be given some sense in the context of causal dependency. However, the notion of causal dependency plays no part at all in the *Proslogion* argument. Indeed, one might even say that St. Anselm's whole intention in the *Proslogion* was to put forward a non-causal proof of the existence of God.<sup>2</sup>

The validity of the *Proslogion* proof depends, then, upon the possibility of comparing things as 'greater' or 'better' or 'more perfect' *in an absolute sense*. But, as we have seen, outside the context of causal dependency it is difficult to see exactly how such absolute comparisons can be made. Within our experience we can only make comparisons *in particular respects*, and it would have to be *proved* or demonstrated in some way that it is possible and licit to make absolute comparisons. To put it in another way, we can say that, within our experience, no being can ever be so great that no greater can be thought. Of course a being can be *de facto* the greatest in some respect; for example, the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Malcolm, 'Anselm's Ontological Arguments', p. 47. 'There is a definite connection in common language between the notions of dependency and inferiority, and independence and superiority. To say that something which was dependent on nothing whatever was superior to ("greater than") anything that was dependent in any way upon anything is quite in keeping with the everyday use of the terms "superior" and "greater".'

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gilson, 'Le Sens et la nature de l'argument de S. Anselme', p. 18. See also A. Forest, *Le mouvement doctrinal du IX<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in the series *Histoire de l'Église*, ed. Fliche et Jarry, xxiii, p. 61. 'The novelty of the argument is emphasized in the *Proslogion*. In effect it cannot be reduced to a proof by way of causality such as is found, under very different guises, in St. Augustine and St. Thomas. Its originality consists in using the very idea of God within which we can, as it were, read the necessity of His existence.'

velocity of light is, as a matter of fact, the greatest velocity in our universe. But the velocity of light is also a finite velocity and we can quite well conceive of a greater velocity; it is not, and cannot be, that velocity than which a greater cannot be thought. And this, of course, is true of everything else within our experience; no thing can ever be so great that a greater cannot be thought. It would then have first to be shown that the things 'within our experience' are *not* the only kind of things, if we are to give a meaning to the notion of a being so great that no greater can be thought. We should, that is, first have to prove the existence of God before we could give a sense to the notion of a being so great that no greater could possibly be thought. In other words, we have, in a sense, to *prove* that the notion is meaningful, for it is not immediately evident that it is meaningful. Of course, this means that equally it cannot be immediately evident that it is *meaningless*; for if the notion of a being so great that no greater could be thought is only meaningful if it is first shown that the things 'within our experience' are not the only kind of things, then equally the notion could only be meaningless if it were first shown that the things 'within our experience' were necessarily the only kind of things. In short, if we cannot *a priori* affirm the logical possibility of the existence of God, equally we cannot *a priori* deny the logical possibility of the existence of God.

To conclude our discussion of the formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' we may remark that for St. Anselm 'being thought of' simply means being logically conceivable. For something to be able to be thought of or conceived means that it is logically possible; it does not in any way mean that it is imaginable in the sense that we can conjure up an image of it, or that it is knowable in a positive sense, as when we apprehend something existing in actual reality. 'Cogitare' for St. Anselm has the connotation of entertaining something in thought, rather than the direct knowing of something existing in reality. Anselm uses the verb 'intelligere' for this latter sense of thinking or knowing and, as we shall see later in his reply to Gaunilo, the distinction between the two senses of 'knowing' is of considerable importance to him.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See P. Michaud-Quantin, 'Notes sur le vocabulaire psychologique de saint Anselme', in *Spic. Bec.*, pp. 23-30, cf. p. 24: 'The "cogitare" refers to reality, but it

We must now examine the second premiss of St. Anselm's argument in Chapter II of the *Proslogion*, namely, that what exists in actual reality is greater than what exists in the mind alone. It is this premiss that allows us to infer from the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' to its instantiation in actual existence, and it is absolutely essential to his argument. As we have already suggested, the objection that St. Anselm argues directly from the conceptual or logical order to the real order, that is, from the idea of God to the actual existence of God, is simply a vulgar travesty of his argument.

To some extent the observations already made on the term 'greater' apply here also, although, as we shall see in a moment, the sense in which an actual existent is *greater* than a conceptual existent is not precisely the same as that implied in the formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'.

First of all, it is obvious enough that when St. Anselm speaks of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' as existing in the mind ('in intellectu'), he does not mean this to be taken in any psychological sense, as though there were existents of two distinct kinds, real existents and mental existents. For something to exist 'in the mind' simply means, for St. Anselm, that it is thinkable, or conceivable, or intelligible, or logically possible; in other words, we know what it would be like for that thing to exist, but we do not know whether it actually exists or not. Now in what sense can we compare something in the mind—something conceivable or logically possible—with something existing in reality? And again, assuming that we can compare them, in what sense can we say that for something actually to exist is *greater* than for that same thing merely to exist in the mind, or to exist conceivably or possibly?

First, can we really *compare* something in the mind with that something existing in reality; can we, for example, compare £1,000 as conceived in the mind and £1,000 actually existing in my pocket? There certainly is a *difference* between

is a process which is accomplished within the mind itself in an autonomous manner; "intelligere" implies a confrontation, a permanent contact between the mind and external reality'; p. 25: 'The argument of the *Proslogion* could be expressed on the psychological level by the formula: a "cogitare" exists such that of itself it constitutes an "intelligere", that is to say, whose object necessarily implies and includes its reality.'

thinking of having £1,000 and actually having that £1,000, but simply that there is a *difference* does not mean that they are *comparable* as 'greater' and 'lesser'.

It could be objected at once that if we were to take this principle at its face value we should be led to say that actually having cancer ('in re') was 'greater' or 'better' or 'more perfect' (*qua* having cancer) than merely possibly having cancer or thinking about having cancer ('in intellectu'). Perhaps St. Anselm might admit this and say that an actual evil was in fact a *greater* evil than a merely possible evil; however, it would surely be paradoxical to speak of it as a 'more perfect' evil.<sup>1</sup>

But apart from this in what sense can we say that actual existents are greater *absolutely* than possible or conceptual existents? Of course it may be that something actual is greater or better or more perfect *in some particular respect*; for me, poor and in need of the money, an actual £1,000 is greater than £1,000 merely thought of, or rather, an actual £1,000 is greater than none at all; but how can we say that *in itself* the actual £1,000 is greater or more perfect?<sup>2</sup> A possible £1,000 is the possibility of there being an actual £1,000; it is not some queer, ghost-like kind of (actual, real) money. A possible £1,000 is not a sum of money, albeit of a peculiar kind; it is the possibility of there being a sum of money. And the fact that I am aware of the possible £1,000, or the fact of its 'existing in my mind', does not make me any richer than one who is not aware of the possibility of this £1,000, or who does not have it in his mind; nor does it make me poorer than one who has an actual £1,000 in his pocket.

To put the point in another way, the difference between a possible £1,000 and an actual £1,000 is not subject to comparison in the sense that the latter has all the properties that the former has, *plus* the additional 'property' of actual existence.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, also, the objection is not altogether fair in that it supposes that evils are autonomous existents. St. Anselm might argue that evils are 'privations' parasitic upon goods, and that actual evils are greater than possible evils simply because actual goods are greater than possible or conceivable goods.

<sup>2</sup> As Malcolm has put it: 'It makes sense and it is true to say that my future house will be a better one if it is insulated than if it is not insulated; but what could it mean to say that it will be a better house if it exists than if it does not? My future child will be a better man if he is honest than if he is not; but who would understand the saying that he will be a better man if he exists than if he does not?' ('Anselm's Ontological Arguments', p. 43).



As Kant pointed out, the *concept* of a possible £1,000 and the *concept* of an actual £1,000 are exactly the same. 'By whatever and by however many predicates we may think a thing, even if we completely determine it—we do not make the least addition to the thing when we further declare that this thing *is*. Otherwise, it would not be exactly the same thing that exists, but something more than we had thought in the concept; and we could not, therefore, say that the exact object of my concept exists.'<sup>1</sup> Expressed more generally, existence is not a property or attribute on a par with other properties and attributes of things.

The principle 'existence is not a predicate' is commonly thought to be fatal to St. Anselm's argument and also to the form of the 'ontological argument' espoused by Descartes and Leibniz.<sup>2</sup> However, in the form in which it is usually proposed 'existence is not a predicate' means no more than that 'exists' is not a predicate of the same kind as other predicates, 'round', 'red', 'six feet tall', &c., and that it cannot be 'contained' analytically in the notion of any subject in the same way as, say, the notion of 'plane figure containing two right angles' is contained in the notion of 'triangle'. In this form of the principle it is clear that neither Anselm nor Descartes is touched by it, for both admit that it is only in one unique case that 'exists' can be analytically contained within the notion of a subject.<sup>3</sup>

However, the principle 'existence is not a predicate' may be couched in a more rigorous form. Thus it may be said that 'exists' does not function as a true predicate in sentences in which it is used, but is rather used to set up or posit or propose

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. N. Kemp Smith, London, 1929, p. 505.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Malcolm, 'Anselm's Ontological Arguments', p. 44: 'Anselm's ontological proof of *Proslogion* 2 is fallacious because it rests on the false doctrine that existence is a real perfection (and therefore that "existence" is a "real predicate").' Gassendi makes the same point against Descartes: see Haldane and Ross, *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, ii. 186: 'Existence is a perfection neither in God nor in anything else; it is rather that in the absence of which there is no perfection . . .'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Descartes, *Meditation v*: 'Being accustomed in all other things to make a distinction between essence and existence I easily persuade myself that existence can be separated from the essence of God, and that we can thus conceive God as not actually existing. But, nevertheless, when I think of it with more attention, I clearly see that existence can no more be separated from the essence of God than can having its three angles equal to two right angles be separated from the essence of a triangle.' For Anselm see *The Author's Reply*, p. 177.

a logical subject-of-predication. As such it cannot itself be a predicate of the subject-of-predication that it sets up. In other words, '*X* exists' may be translated as '*X* can function as a logical subject to which predicates may be applied', so that 'exists' itself cannot be one of the predicates that may be applied to *X*. From this point of view it is all one whether we say either that 'exists' is not a predicate or that it is a meta-predicate (that is to say, it predicates something of *X*, namely, that something may be predicated of *X*). Of course, interpreted in this way, existential statements do not say anything about anything, but merely tell us that it is possible to say something about something. And again, it is obvious that in this sense 'exists' may be used of conceptual or imaginary or fictional subjects as well as of really existing subjects. Anything used as a subject-of-predication in any 'realm of discourse', whether conceptual or fictional or real, will, in this sense, be said to exist. Mr. Micawber exists in that in a piece of fiction certain predicates are applied to him; and the dragon I dreamed of last night also exists in that I may apply certain predicates to it.

This sense of 'exists' is, then, a purely formal or 'logical' one and may be thought to be quite trivial. However, it is useful to make it explicit because it helps us to discern another function of 'exists', namely that of distinguishing conceptual and fictional and imaginary subjects-of-predication on the one hand from real subjects-of-predication on the other. Thus 'Dragons do not exist' may be translated as 'The term "dragons" does not function as a subject-of-predication in a real realm of discourse'; or, more colloquially, 'You can't talk of dragons as you do of real things; you can only talk of them in stories or as you do of imaginary things.' Again, 'Poltergeists exist' may be translated as 'The term "poltergeist" can function as a subject-of-predication in a real realm of discourse, as contrasted with fictional or imaginary realms of discourse'; or 'You can talk of poltergeists as you do of real things.' This way of putting matters is, it is obvious, simply a circumlocution, for though we have translated talk about real and conceptual *things* into talk about subjects-of-predication in real and conceptual *realms of discourse*, the latter distinction is defined in terms of the former. Thus to be a subject-of-predication in a real realm of discourse means that we can apply predicates to it, or talk of what it

refers to, as we do of *real things*. However, even if in one way the circumlocution gets us no further forward, it does all the same bring out in what sense 'exists' functions as a predicate and in what sense it does not; or, to put it in another way, in what sense we can distinguish between real and conceptual existence without supposing that existence is a predicate in the ordinary sense.

Now it is clear that St. Anselm and Descartes, in their respective ways, might reformulate their arguments in terms of this account of existential statements, so as to escape the objection that they both supposed that 'exists' was a real predicate. Thus Anselm might say that his premiss 'what exists in reality is greater than what exists in the mind alone' can be translated as 'to function as a subject-of-predication in a real realm of discourse is greater than to function as a subject-of-predication in a fictional or imaginary or conceptual realm of discourse'. This translation makes it clear that 'exists' is not being used as a predicate in the ordinary sense, but that nevertheless some distinction and some comparison is being made between real and conceptual existence.

We may conclude from this, therefore, that the 'existence is not a predicate' dogma is not of itself fatal to St. Anselm's argument. However, we are still left with the problem of giving a sense to the *comparison* between real and conceptual existence. It is clear from our analysis that 'exists' can function, in certain contexts, to *distinguish* real subjects-of-predication from fictional and conceptual subjects-of-predication, but it is also clear that it is difficult to give any sense to a *comparison* between real and conceptual existence.

Indeed, it might be asked whether the very possibility of comparison between the two does not presuppose that a real existent has some 'property' (namely the 'property' of real existence) that the conceptual existent lacks. For, if we admit with Kant that existence is not a real predicate, have we not thereby admitted that no comparison at all is possible, for the very notion of comparison involves, by definition, that two similar subjects have different predicates?

However, Anselm might reply that it is, of course, obvious that any comparison between real and conceptual existents cannot be the same kind as other comparisons. What are being

compared here are, to put it roughly, two different kinds of existents, and a comparison *between* different kinds of existents cannot be made in the same way as a comparison *within* the respective kinds of existents. We can compare a *conceptual* £50 with a *conceptual* £100 and we can compare a *real* £50 with a *real* £100, but we cannot compare in the same way a *conceptual* £50 with a *real* £100. A conceptual £100 is greater than a conceptual £50, and a real £100 is greater than a real £50; but in Anselm's sense a real £50 is 'greater' than a conceptual £100. Indeed, a real 5*d* is 'greater' than a conceptual £50. What we are comparing here, Anselm might argue, are real and conceptual 'subjects-of-predication', and therefore the comparison cannot be made in terms of predicates as all other comparisons are made.

By definition, then, the comparison that Anselm is making between real and conceptual existents is not like any other kind of comparison. But does that therefore mean that no kind of comparison at all can be made; does it necessarily exclude the possibility of any such comparison? Surely, St. Anselm might object, there is a perfectly clear sense in which the real and actual is greater than the conceptual and possible. Thus, if *X* really exists, *X* is both conceivable and real, and is thus greater than *X* as merely conceivable; or, if *X* is actual, then *X* is both actual and possible and is thus greater than what is merely possible. What is real and actual, then, seems to have a certain 'priority' over what is conceptual and possible. But what sort of priority is this? Is it not a purely *logical* priority? Does it not simply mean that if I know that something actually exists then I may infer that it is possible (*ab esse ad posse valet illatio*); but that if I know that something is possible I may not infer that it actually exists (*ab posse ad esse non valet illatio*)? From this point of view we may certainly say that to exist in reality is (logically) greater than to exist conceptually or possibly or 'in the mind' alone. But then it is difficult to see that this logical sense of 'greater' is the same as the metaphysical or ontological sense of 'greater' (things being greater in respect of their 'degree of being') implied in the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. However, it might be replied in turn to this that the logical priority of real and actual existence over conceptual and possible existence

reflects an ontological priority. In other words, we may infer from real existence to conceptual existence (but not vice versa) *because* real existence is in some way prior to (greater than) conceptual existence. One way of showing this perhaps would be to prove that it is self-contradictory to suppose that only possible beings should exist, and that it is necessary for at least one real and actual being to exist. That is to say, it would have to be shown that the proposition 'All existents are conceptual or possible existents' ('Nothing real or actual exists') is self-contradictory, so that 'Some existents are real and actual existents' ('Something real and actual exists') is a necessary proposition. If this could be shown, then we could say that real and actual existence was ontologically prior to conceptual and possible existence. But this, of course, is precisely what is at issue between the theist and atheist, and it is precisely what can be proved only by proving or disproving the existence of God. Part of the point of the theist's proof of the existence of God is to prove *eo ipso* that 'Nothing real and actual exists' is necessarily false, and likewise the point of the atheist's disproof is to prove that 'Something real and actual exists' is not and cannot be a necessary proposition. If, then, we had first proved the existence of God, we could say that real and actual existence has an ontological priority over conceptual and possible existence. But, of course, Anselm wants to establish the priority in order to prove the existence of God.

Despite all these considerations, however, St. Anselm's premiss that real and actual existents are 'greater' than conceptual and possible existents seems to be so intuitively self-evident and commonsensible that one cannot feel completely confident in rejecting it. But we may at least say that the comparison between real and conceptual existence is such a different kind of comparison from those we ordinarily make that we may reasonably place the onus on Anselm to show what sense can be given to it.

To conclude our observations on this section of St. Anselm's argument it may be worth while remarking a curious consequence of Anselm's principle that actual existence is greater than existence in the mind alone. Presumably, if the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is meaningful, the notion of 'that than which nothing *less great* can be

thought' is equally meaningful. If we can conceive of a maximum we can conceive of a minimum. Now if, as Anselm holds, to exist in actual reality is greater than existing in the mind alone, then 'that than which nothing *less great* can be thought' cannot exist in actual reality, because if it did it would be 'greater' than if it existed in the mind alone and so would not be the least great being. The least great being, therefore, must exist in the mind alone if it is to be the least great being.<sup>1</sup> However the 'least great being' is to be identified, this curious consequence does at least bring out the oddity of St. Anselm's principle that what exists in actual reality is greater than what exists in the mind.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now sum up our discussion of St. Anselm's argument in Chapter II of the *Proslogion*. First of all we saw that outside the context of causal dependence it is difficult to give a sense to the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' without assuming that it is possible to compare things as greater or more perfect in an absolute respect. Again, we saw the difficulties of comparing, as 'greater' and 'lesser', things 'in the mind' with things in actual reality. We may object, then, that for St. Anselm's proof to be valid the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' would have first to be shown to be meaningful, for it cannot be assumed without argument that it is meaningful.<sup>2</sup> As it stands, St. Anselm's proof will only

<sup>1</sup> This consequence was some years ago remarked by A. A. Cock, 'The Ontological Argument for the Existence of God', in *Aristotelian Society Proceedings*, xviii, 1917-18, 363-84. Recently C. K. Grant has revived it, and, equating 'that than which nothing less great can be thought' with the Devil (on the supposition that the Devil is the contrary of God who is 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'), has argued that St. Anselm's proof of the existence of God involves a disproof of the actual existence of the Devil: 'The Ontological Disproof of the Devil', in *Analysis*, 1957. However, it is obvious that even if God is the greatest and metaphysically most perfect being, the Devil is not definable in orthodox Christian theology as the *metaphysically* least perfect being, though he is the *morally* least perfect being. Again, Anselm is aware that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is not itself within the hierarchical series of beings graded according to their 'greatness' or 'perfection', so that we cannot think of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' and 'that than which nothing less great can be thought' as contraries at opposite ends of a spectrum.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Leibniz, *New Essays*, Bk. IV, ch. 10. St. Anselm's argument 'is not a paradoxism but it is an imperfect demonstration, which assumes something that must still be proved in order to render it mathematically evident; that is, it is tacitly assumed that this idea of the all-great or all-perfect being is possible, and implies no contradiction'.

work for the sort of atheist who understands by the proposition 'God does not exist' something like the following: 'We know what it would be like for God to exist but actually He does not exist', or 'God could possibly exist but actually does not exist', or 'The concept "God" is meaningful but it is not instantiated', or 'The proposition "God exists" is meaningful but false'. But it will not work against the logical atheist who denies that the concept 'God' has a meaning, or who maintains that 'God does not exist' is not logically similar to 'Unicorns do not exist', but rather to 'Square circles do not exist'. As against the logical atheist Anselm must first show that the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful one. Anselm was not unaware of this point for in his reply to Gaunilo he claims that it is possible to show that the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful one by reflecting on the differences between temporal and supra-temporal things. We shall discuss later what can be said about this proof of the meaningfulness of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'.

To say, however, that Anselm must first show that the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful one, implies that the onus of proof is upon him rather than upon the atheist. But there is a difficulty here that is worth exploring because it helps to bring out the logical peculiarity of the propositions 'God exists' and 'God does not exist'. The difficulty is this: if St. Anselm has to show that the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is *meaningful*, does not the logical atheist have equally to show, from his point of view, that it is *meaningless*? Does not the logical atheist have to say not merely that *within our experience* we do not compare things as absolutely greater or more perfect (while tacitly allowing that it might be *possible* to give a sense to the notion of absolute perfection *outside* our experience), but that *necessarily* it is the case that things are not greater or more perfect in an absolute sense? or that it is *self-contradictory* to suppose that things can be compared as absolutely greater or more perfect? To put it crudely, is not the logical atheist compelled to say that the things within our experience (spatio-temporal and contingent beings which allow only relative comparisons, so that no such being is ever such that a greater cannot be conceived

than it) are *necessarily* the only things? Then, of course, the notion of God, defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', would be meaningless by definition and the logical atheist would be committed to an 'ontological disproof' of the existence of God.

If the atheist, St. Anselm might continue, does not wish to claim that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is logically meaningless, then he must allow that it is meaningful (though not in fact instantiated). Now he is in the position of the 'factual atheist', and of course the *Proslogion* argument will work against him.

We shall return to this question when we consider St. Anselm's further argument in Chapter III of the *Proslogion*. Meanwhile we may remark that at least these considerations show that the categories 'meaningful/meaningless' and 'true/false' function in an eccentric way when applied to the proposition 'God exists', for one of the morals to be drawn from St. Anselm's discussion is that we cannot both admit that the proposition 'God exists' is *meaningful* and yet at the same time claim that it is *false*. From another point of view St. Anselm's discussion also shows that the 'possibility' that the theist claims is realized when he affirms that God exists, and the 'possibility' that the atheist denies or excludes when he denies that God exists is a very queer kind of possibility indeed. Again it seems to follow that the onus of proof or disproof of the existence of God lies equally on both sides.

A final point: we have so far been assuming with St. Anselm that the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a distinctive and adequate one. But is this a definition that would serve adequately to distinguish God from His creation? Is it not possible to conceive that, even if 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' *actually* exists, it might nevertheless exist in a *contingent* way? There is nothing in the definition as it stands to exclude this possibility, and to this extent it is deficient as a definition of God, for we surely cannot allow that God might exist in a contingent way. St. Anselm himself seems to have realized this, for in the next chapter of the *Proslogion* he argues that God not only actually exists, but He exists in such a way that He cannot be thought not to exist; that is, He exists in a necessary or non-contingent way.



## CHAPTER III

It is not clear whether St. Anselm means the argument in this chapter to be a complement to the argument advanced in Chapter II, or whether it represents an independent proof in its own right. St. Anselm speaks of there being 'one single argument' in the *Proslogion*, so that he probably regarded the argument in Chapter III as a complement to the basic argument in Chapter II, serving to defend it against the objection we have just considered, namely that it does not adequately exclude the possibility of God, if defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', existing in a contingent way. God, argues St. Anselm here, cannot exist in a contingent way, for to exist necessarily (i.e. for a thing to exist in such a way that it cannot be thought not to exist) is *greater* than existing contingently; so that if 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' were to exist contingently it would not be as great as it would be if it existed necessarily, and so would not be, precisely, that than which nothing greater can be thought.<sup>1</sup> The argument in Chapter III shares its main premiss, the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', with the argument in Chapter II; but in place of the minor premiss 'what exists in reality is greater than what exists in the mind alone' the argument in Chapter III has the premiss 'what cannot be thought not to exist is greater than what can be thought not to exist', or 'what exists necessarily is greater than what exists contingently'.<sup>2</sup> So, in the minor premiss of the Chapter II argument, possible and actual existence are compared, whereas in the Chapter III argument two kinds of actual existence, contingent and necessary, are compared. However, if we prove that God *necessarily* exists, we prove *eo ipso* that He actually exists; we do not need to prove first that God *actually* exists before proving that He exists *necessarily*. We cannot infer that because something actually exists it therefore necessarily exists; but we can infer that because something necessarily exists it actually exists. From this point of view the Chapter III proof, whatever St. Anselm's intentions about

<sup>1</sup> p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> For St. Anselm 'necessarily X' is equivalent to 'impossible that not-X' (*Cur Deus Homo*, II. xvii; 123), and on occasion, as in Chapter III, this latter is interpreted as 'logically impossible that not-X'.

it may have been, is logically independent of the proof in Chapter II.<sup>1</sup> In fact it is logically superior to the Chapter II proof because it concludes that God, defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', both actually and necessarily exists. The notion of God to which the Chapter III proof leads is therefore a more adequate notion than that of Chapter II. In sum, not only does the Chapter III argument not presuppose the Chapter II proof but it makes the latter redundant.<sup>2</sup>

We must see now if the premiss 'what cannot be thought not to be is greater than what can be thought not to be' falls foul of the objections that we have seen could be urged against the premiss of the Chapter II proof, namely that what exists in reality is greater than what exists in the mind alone.

The first objection that might be urged against St. Anselm's position here is that it assumes that the notion of 'necessary existence' is meaningful. But, if Kant is right, the notion cannot be meaningful, for to assert that God is a necessary existent is equivalent to asserting that the proposition 'God exists' is a logically necessary proposition, so that it would be self-contradictory to assert the proposition 'God does not exist'. But it is not self-contradictory to assert this latter proposition, just as it is never self-contradictory to deny any existential propositions which, in Kant's terms, are always synthetic.<sup>3</sup> Kant's criticism has been developed by certain modern thinkers and combined with the doctrine that all necessity is reducible to logical necessity, which in turn, it is claimed, is simply based upon the

<sup>1</sup> Aquinas, *Sum. Cont. Gent.* i. x, supposes that it is an independent proof.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible to reconstruct the Chapter III proof on Leibnizian lines to make it more economical, by doing away with the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', and more rigorous. Thus, God might be defined as 'that being which cannot be thought not to be'. Now, if that which cannot be thought not to be can be thought of, then it must actually be; or, to put it in another way, if we can conceive of a necessary existent, then this means that it is possible, and, if it is possible, then it must actually be: if what-cannot-not-be can be, then it must actually be. Cf. Leibniz, *De la démonstration cartésienne de l'existence de Dieu, par le P. Lamy*, cited Domet de Vorges, *Saint Anselme*, Paris, 1901, p. 302: 'By saying only that God is a primordial being, or a being existing of itself (*de soi*), that is to say, a being which exists by its own essence, it is easy to conclude that such a being, if it is possible, exists.' But it is very doubtful if St. Anselm would accept this reformulation, for it leaves out of account the comparison between necessary existence and contingent existence as 'greater' and 'lesser', which, as we have seen, is essential to St. Anselm's proof.

<sup>3</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 502, 504.

conventions of language. From this it follows, so it is alleged, that the notion of a necessary existent is a self-contradictory one. As one writer has put it: 'If God is to satisfy religious claims and needs, He must be a being in every way inescapable, One whose existence and whose possession of certain excellences we cannot possibly conceive away.' But, he goes on, 'modern views make it self-evidently absurd (if they don't make it ungrammatical) to speak of such a Being and attribute existence to Him. It was indeed an ill day for Anselm when he hit upon his famous proof. For on that day he not only laid bare something that is of the essence of an adequate religious object, but also something that entails its necessary non-existence.'<sup>1</sup>

Now Anselm might reply both to Kant and to his modern followers that their objections prove too much, for they do not simply assert that the existence of all the things within our experience is contingent (so that all existential propositions about things within our immediate experience are synthetic),<sup>2</sup> but they go further and claim that it is *logically necessary* that all existential propositions are synthetic. Thus they are led to maintain paradoxically that it is logically impossible for the proposition 'God exists' to be a logically necessary one, and they end by espousing an 'ontological disproof' of the existence of God.

We may say, then, that if we have no right to assume that the notion of 'necessary existence' is *meaningful*, without further argument, equally we have no right to assume that it is *meaningless*, without further argument. Merely logical analysis of the notion one way or another cannot decide whether the notion is meaningful or not, so that, if there cannot be an *a priori* 'ontological' proof of the existence of God, equally there cannot be an *a priori* 'ontological' disproof. Once again, it is difficult to see where the onus of proof lies here.<sup>3</sup> And once

<sup>1</sup> J. N. Findlay, 'Can God's Existence Be Disproved?' in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, ed. A. Flew and A. MacIntyre, London, 1955, p. 55; see also the essays by J. J. C. Smart and I. Crombie in the same volume, and my discussion of these views in 'Religious Language and Language About God', in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, i, 1961, 139-67.

<sup>2</sup> A fact that St. Anselm admits. Cf. *Proslogion*, p. 119. 'Everything there is, except You alone [God] can be thought of as not existing.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Malcolm, 'Anselm's Ontological Arguments', pp. 55-56: 'The view that logical necessity merely reflects the use of words cannot possibly have the

again it is difficult to see what kind of possibility the theist wishes left open for the notion of 'necessary existence', and which the atheist wishes to exclude. In any case no purely logical considerations will serve to break the deadlock between theist and atheist over the meaningfulness of the notion of 'necessary existence'—the theist demanding that the atheist demonstrate that the notion is self-contradictory, and the atheist demanding that the theist demonstrate that the notion is not self-contradictory.<sup>1</sup>

It would only be possible to break this deadlock if other extra-logical considerations were brought in. Thus, for example, the theist might argue that, by reflection upon the contingent existents in the world, we are led to ask for an ultimate causal explanation of them, and are therefore constrained to postulate the existence of a 'necessary existent' as cause of the contingent existents. Here we do not presuppose that the notion of 'necessary existence' has meaning *a priori*, but rather the argument forces us to postulate *that* the terms 'necessary' and 'existent' may be conjoined and *that* the notion of 'necessary existent' is meaningful, though we do not know *how* the terms 'necessary' and 'existent' are conjoinable (as we do, for instance, with 'triangle' and 'figure containing two right angles') nor *how* the

implication that every existential proposition must be contingent. That view requires us to *look at* the use of words and not manufacture *a priori* theses about it. In the Ninetieth Psalm it is said: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." Here is expressed the idea of the necessary existence and eternity of God, an idea that is essential to the Jewish and Christian religions. In those complex systems of thought, those "language-games", God has the status of a necessary being. Who can doubt that? Here we must say with Wittgenstein, "This language-game is played." I believe we may rightly take the existence of those religious systems of thought in which God figures as a necessary being to be a disproof of the dogma, affirmed by Hume and others, that no existential propositions can be necessary.'

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, *ibid.* 59-60, claims that there is a presumption that the notion of necessary existence is not self-contradictory. 'With respect to any particular reasoning that is offered for holding that the concept of seeing a material thing, for example, is self-contradictory, one may try to show the invalidity of the reasoning and thus free the concept from the charge of being self-contradictory *on that ground*. But I do not understand what it would mean to demonstrate *in general*, and not in respect to any particular reasoning, that the concept is not self-contradictory. So it is with the concept of God. I should think there is no more of a presumption that it is self-contradictory than is the concept of seeing a material thing. Both concepts have a place in the thinking and lives of human beings.'

notion of 'necessary existent' is meaningful.<sup>1</sup> But this, of course, is to introduce the notion of causal dependence into the argument—a notion which, as we have already seen, Anselm leaves aside altogether.

In summary, then, it is difficult to see how St. Anselm's proofs, both in Chapter II and in Chapter III, can be made to work unless some kind of causal or 'cosmological' argument is presupposed, to give meaning both to the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' and to the premiss that 'necessary existence is greater than contingent existence'. But then, obviously, if St. Anselm's proofs presuppose a causal argument, this makes them redundant and defeats St. Anselm's whole purpose in the *Proslogion*.

#### CHAPTER IV

St. Anselm, we said before, did not consider that the existence of God was self-evident in the strict sense, but he did think that the premisses of his argument were so luminously clear and unquestionable that only a 'fool' could fail to be convinced by it. How, then, can the Fool say that God does not exist, Anselm asks in this chapter, if he accepts the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'? It is, says St. Anselm, because the Fool does not really think of what he is saying; he takes in the words or the verbal formula ('vox') 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', but he does not really understand *what* the words mean, that is to say, the reality ('res') they signify.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to notice that for St. Anselm the 'insipiens' is not just one who denies truths that are strictly self-evident. Thus, in the *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm says that the 'insipiens' is one 'who declares to be impossible something which must necessarily be, on the ground that he does not know how this is'. And he allows that it may be necessary to prove to the 'insipiens' that what he declares to be impossible may

<sup>1</sup> As Aquinas says, *Sum. Cont. Gent.* 1. xi, the proposition 'God does not exist' is not, for us, a self-contradictory one. However, this does not imply that God is a contingent being, but rather that God's existence must be proved or demonstrated from His effects. The necessity of God's existence is seen only as the conclusion of a demonstration. As Aquinas puts it, 'God can be thought not to be' is not a statement about the mode of God's existence but rather about our deficient way of knowing God.

<sup>2</sup> p. 121.

nevertheless exist.<sup>1</sup> Thus the fact that St. Anselm holds that it is 'insipientia' to deny the existence of God does not mean that he therefore holds that the existence of God is self-evident and does not need to be argued for or proved.

The remaining chapters of the *Proslogion* are taken up mainly with a discussion of the various attributes (wisdom, omnipotence, mercifulness, justice, &c.) of God. St. Anselm always sees what must be said and what must not be said about the divine attributes, and he is clearly aware of the thorny problems that the reconciliation of the various attributes raises. But for the most part St. Anselm's discussion is on a fairly general level and it does not have anything of the philosophical depth and sophistication of Aquinas's treatment of the divine attributes, for example.<sup>2</sup> We shall content ourselves, therefore, with noticing a few points of philosophical interest in these chapters.

## CHAPTER V

Anselm begins his discussion of the divine attributes by stating the principle on which we attribute various 'perfections' to God. If God is that than which nothing greater can be thought, He must also be the supreme good or the most perfect being, so that no good or perfection can be lacking to Him. God must therefore be 'whatever it is better to be than not to be', and we must predicate of Him all the perfections we find in creatures, and deny of Him all the privations and negations that we find in creatures. We can, for example, predicate of God that He is just, truthful, and happy, and these are not just metaphorical descriptions of God. Anselm is here hinting at the theory of analogy which Aquinas was later to develop more fully.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I. xxv; 95.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time we may agree with R. W. Southern's observation: 'It is the first stage of his argument (occupying only the first three out of twenty-six chapters of the treatise) which has given Anselm his place in the history of philosophy; the remainder has been, from the point of view of Anselm's own thought, unduly neglected.' *The Life of St. Anselm*, p. 29, n. 3.

<sup>3</sup> See also *Monol.* xv; 28-29, for a fuller discussion. Vaggagini, 'La Hantise des "Rationes Necessariae" de saint Anselme . . .', p. 106, says that St. Anselm's distinction between 'simple' and 'mixed' perfections was 'the first clear theoretical determination in the history of theodicy of a procedure which was afterwards called analogy of proper proportionality—in acknowledged opposition to the procedure of mere metaphor—by means of which, in philosophy, we attribute

## CHAPTER VI

St. Anselm here makes the point that God is 'perceptive' ('sensibilis') in the sense that He knows all things, though since He is not corporeal He does not know through the senses as we do.

## CHAPTER VII

St. Anselm considers the familiar puzzle: if God is omnipotent and so can do all things, how is it that He cannot be corrupted, nor tell lies, nor reverse the past? Are these 'inabilities' limitations upon God's omnipotence? Anselm answers by anticipating Professor Ryle and distinguishing two senses of 'can' ('posse'). Thus, in 'God *can* foresee all things', 'can' is used to signify that God has a certain positive power; but in 'Material things *can* be corrupted', 'can' is used to signify 'lack of power or impotence', an 'ability' to *suffer* something rather than an ability to *do* something. Not being 'able' to be corrupted, then, does not signify that God lacks some positive power, but rather that He 'lacks' a lack of power. These 'inabilities', therefore, are not really limitations upon God's omnipotence.<sup>1</sup>

Anselm notes that other verbs such as 'is' ('esse') and 'is doing' ('facere') have the same logical features. For example, running is 'doing' something, and resting is also 'doing' something, but the one signifies a performance and the other the cessation of a performance, and the cessation of a performance is not itself a performance.<sup>2</sup>

formally to God, conceived as the most perfect being, every simple perfection such as goodness, wisdom, and others, which we discover in the world, after having purified them from the imperfections with which they are found in creatures'.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller analysis of 'can' and 'able' see G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, London, p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> St. Anselm seems to have been influenced here by Boethius' commentary on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*. In the recently discovered Anselmian treatise (F. S. Schmitt, *Ein neues unvollendetes Werk des hl. Anselm von Canterbury*, 1936) St. Anselm engages in a much more sophisticated analysis of 'facere'. Thus he distinguishes between 'doing' in the ordinary sense, e.g. killing a man, 'doing' in the sense of enabling another, and 'doing' in the sense of allowing something to be done. Cf. D. P. Henry, 'St. Anselm on the Varieties of "Doing"', in *Theoria*, xix, 3, 1953; 'St. Anselm on Scriptural Analysis', in *Sophia*, i, 3, 1962.

## CHAPTERS VIII-XI

In these chapters St. Anselm is concerned with a general discussion of God's justice and mercy and his analysis raises no points needing special mention.

## CHAPTER XII

This chapter brings out the point that properties are not attributed to God in the same way in which they are attributed to creatures. When we say 'God is wise' we do not mean that God is a member of the class of things of which wisdom is a property. God rather is identical with the wisdom by which He is wise. When we say that God is 'perfectly wise' or 'supremely wise', we may think that this means that God is wise in the highest degree. But there is not merely a difference of degree between the way in which God is wise and the way in which a man is wise; the way in which God is wise differs *in kind* from the way in which any creature is wise. God is not *a* wise being; He is rather wisdom itself. St. Anselm, however, does not consider in detail the difficulties that these divine attributes obviously raise.

## CHAPTER XIII

St. Anselm discusses in what sense God is limitless and eternal. He distinguishes between

- (I) those things that are wholly in one place and can neither be elsewhere at the same time nor everywhere (they are, of course, material bodies);
- (II) those things that are wholly in one place but can be elsewhere at the same time, though not everywhere (these are created spirits; for example, the soul is in all the parts of the body. When, for instance, I stub my toe or jam my finger, it is 'I' who feel the pain in the different parts of my body); and
- (III) those things that are wholly in one place and yet exist everywhere (this is true of God alone, for God is limited neither by time nor place).



Spatio-temporal limitation of the kind represented in (I) and (II) above is used later by St. Anselm as a criterion of contingency. Thus, in his reply to Gaunilo he argues, 'What did not exist yesterday, and today exists, can thus, as it is understood not to have existed yesterday, be supposed not to exist at any time. And that which does not exist here in this place, and does exist elsewhere can, in the same way as it does not exist here, be thought not to exist anywhere.'<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XV

Here, in this important discussion, St. Anselm reminds us that, even if we understand God to be 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', we do not thereby have a positive or determinate knowledge of God. God must be greater than any conception we can form of Him, though this does not mean that our knowledge of Him as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is false. There is a perfectly obvious sense in which we can think of something greater than we can think of, or know that there is something which we cannot know. As St. Anselm says in his *Reply*: 'Just as nothing prevents one from saying "ineffable", although one cannot specify what is said to be ineffable; and just as one can think of the "inconceivable", although one cannot think of what "inconceivable" applies to—so also, when "that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought" is spoken of, there is no doubt at all that what is heard can be thought of and understood, even if the thing itself cannot be thought of or understood.'<sup>2</sup> In the *Monologion* St. Anselm discusses more explicitly the difficulties which attend the use of the terms of ordinary language to describe God who is, by definition, above and beyond every other thing. He admits that we cannot speak of God directly but only 'through some similitude or image'. 'We see and speak of God through some other; we do not see and speak of Him by what is proper to Him.'<sup>3</sup> However, even if what we say about God is not the full truth it is not thereby false. To deal adequately with this whole question St. Anselm would of course need a theory of analogical predication, such as Aquinas was to develop later.

<sup>1</sup> *The Author's Reply*, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 187-9.

<sup>3</sup> *Monol.* lxxv; 76.

## CHAPTERS XVI-XXVI

The remaining chapters of the *Proslogion* consider the inaccessibility and the goodness of God and the book concludes with a very beautiful prayer. ' . . . Lord, by Your Son You command, or rather, counsel us to ask, and You promise that we shall receive, so that our joy may be complete. . . . May I receive what You promise through Your truth so that my joy may be complete. . . . Let my soul hunger for it, let my flesh thirst for it, my whole being desire it until I enter into the joy of the Lord, who is God, Three in One, blessed forever.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> pp. 153-5.

## A REPLY ON BEHALF OF THE FOOL BY GAUNILO

WE now go on to consider the reply written to St. Anselm's *Proslogion* soon after it appeared, by Gaunilo, a monk of the abbey of Marmoutier near Tours. If we accept the account of the great eighteenth-century scholar Dom Edmond Martène,<sup>1</sup> Gaunilo was the son of Gauthier, viscount of Tours. Gaunilo himself had held the title of Count of Montigni, was treasurer of the famous Chapter of St. Martin at Tours, and had been married. Then, after certain family misfortunes which, Dom Edmond says, 'God made use of to bring home to him the instability of the pomps of the world and the benefits of generously despising them so as to follow the maxims of the Gospel',<sup>2</sup> Gaunilo seems to have undergone a religious conversion. Abandoning the world he first of all founded the priory of St. Hilaire-sur-Hière, and then (his wife presumably having died) he became a monk at the monastery of Marmoutier which had been very generously favoured by his parents. Marmoutier had had a long and illustrious history, tracing its origins to St. Martin of Tours in the fourth century and, according to some, having St. Patrick of Ireland as one of its early members.<sup>3</sup> At the time of St. Anselm and Gaunilo the abbey had a considerable reputation for both monastic piety and scholarship. We know, for example, that St. Anselm thought well enough of Marmoutier to recommend the knight Cadulus, who had resisted certain dramatic persuasions of the Devil, to become a monk there,<sup>4</sup> and we also know that many monks from Marmoutier were involved in the foundation of other monastic communities

<sup>1</sup> See E. Martène, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Marmoutier*, 2 vols., published and annotated by C. Chevalier in the series *Mémoires de la société archéologique de Touraine*, xxiv, xxv, 1874-5. For Gaunilo see vol. i, pp. 363-7. Martène had finished this work in 1707 but it was not published until the edition cited above. According to Chevalier, Martène's history is based entirely upon the monastery records; Dom Martène, he says (p. x), 'made a thorough inventory of the chartulary of Marmoutier and copied out in full the most important parts of it. Thanks to these rich materials he composed in two folio volumes the *Histoire de l'abbaye de Marmoutier avec les preuves*'.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 364.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-94.

<sup>4</sup> Eadmer, *Vita*, i, xxv; Southern, pp. 42-43.

in both France and England during the reign of William the Conqueror. Again, contemporary with Gaunilo at Marmoutier were scholars such as the historian Thiery, Sigo (who knew both Greek and Hebrew), and Raoul Méchante-Couronne who had studied in both France and Italy and was a celebrated student of medicine.<sup>1</sup> Particularly under the famous Abbot Albert (1032-62) the monks at Marmoutier appear to have given more than usual attention to scholarship.

Martène estimates that Gaunilo was probably born in 994 and it is known that he was still alive in 1083. If this is so then it means that Gaunilo was some forty years older than St. Anselm and almost eighty-four years of age when, presumably in 1078, he wrote his reply to the *Proslogion*.

No other writing by Gaunilo is extant, which is a pity since, as we shall see, he shows very great philosophical ability. Even if his thinking is not on the same plane as that of St. Anselm, Gaunilo clearly knows what a philosophical argument is and discerns very acutely where the crucial point of the *Proslogion* argument lies.<sup>2</sup>

[1.] Gaunilo begins by briefly summarizing Anselm's argument in the *Proslogion*: (i) the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is in the mind; (ii) if it is in the mind it must also be postulated to exist in reality, since otherwise it would not be that which is greater than everything ('maius omnibus'). Gaunilo's equation of St. Anselm's formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' with 'that which is greater than everything' is, as we shall see later, contested by St. Anselm, who claims that his proof will only work with the original formula.

[2.] Gaunilo now proceeds to the attack. First, in what sense is 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' *in the mind*? In one sense we can 'think of' 'false things' ('falsa'); that is to say we can have thoughts that have no corresponding objects in the extra-mental world. Clearly, then, the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' must exist in the

<sup>1</sup> Martène, vol. i, pp. 353-69.

<sup>2</sup> R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, p. 65, says of Gaunilo's reply: 'Its existence serves as a warning against underestimating the level of philosophical cultivation in communities which have left little trace of their intellectual attainments.'

mind in a different way from these things, for we cannot in their case infer from the fact that they exist in the mind or can be thought of that they therefore must exist in reality. Put in logical terms Gaunilo's point is that, just because a concept is significant or meaningful, it does not mean that it is true or instantiated. And, put in this way, it is obvious that Gaunilo misses Anselm's whole point, which is precisely that in the case of *this one concept alone*, the concept 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', one can legitimately infer from the fact that it is meaningful (together with another premiss) to the fact that it is true or instantiated. With respect to all other concepts or things 'in the mind' Anselm would agree with Gaunilo that this kind of inference is illicit.

Gaunilo, however, goes on to claim that if 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' cannot exist 'in the mind' in the same way as 'false things' do, then it must be 'in the mind' in such a way that, when it is understood, it is understood also to be actually existing. Gaunilo here contrasts 'being thought of' with 'being understood', the first ('cogitare') having the sense of 'being able to be conceived of or entertained in the mind', without reference to whether there is a real object in the world corresponding to what is conceived of, and the second ('intelligere') having the sense of directly understanding some actually existing object. But, Gaunilo argues, 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' cannot be understood, or exist 'in the mind', in this latter way, for then there would be no distinction between this notion being 'in the mind' and its being actually instantiated; in other words, God could not be thought not to exist. However, St. Anselm has already admitted that this distinction can be made and that there is a sense in which God can be thought not actually to exist. Put summarily Gaunilo's argument comes to this: either there is a distinction between existing in the mind and existing in actual reality, in which case Anselm has to *prove* by an 'unquestionable argument' that the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is such that, if it is understood or 'in the mind', we can infer certainly that it exists also in reality; or, there is no distinction between existing in the mind and existing in reality, in which case whatever can be thought of actually exists, which would be absurd.

[3.] The next section is a little obscure, but the sense of what Gaunilo has to say here seems to be as follows. 'That than which nothing greater can be thought' is not 'in the mind' in the same definite and determinate way in which the plan or preconception of a picture is 'in the mind' of the artist. The artist has the plan of the picture really in his mind or in his soul; he has formed the idea in his mind and he does not merely entertain a notion about something. Gaunilo seems here to be referring to St. Augustine's doctrine that I am capable of knowing my own soul and its acts of thought and volition in a more direct and positive way than the way in which I know other things distinct from my soul. And it is precisely in this case that, according to Augustine, I can legitimately move from the order of thought to the order of reality, in that if I can say 'I think', or even 'I am deceived', I can infer 'I exist'.<sup>1</sup> In the one case I know or understand that by means of which I understand (the mind or the soul itself); in the other I know something 'different from the understanding which grasps it'. The conclusion seems to be, then, that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is understood, or thought of, or 'in the mind' only in a weak and imperfect way that will not allow any inference to be made as to its actual realization.

[4.] Gaunilo reinforces this point by arguing that when I hear the formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' I certainly take in the words, but I do not have any kind of clear and distinct notion of what has been said. Thus, I do not know *what* is meant or signified by the formula, nor whether there is anything corresponding to it in actual reality. If I hear someone talking about some individual man who is unknown to me, I can nevertheless know something about him, namely that he is a man. Even if I do not know anything about him individually I can at least know what *kind* of thing is being talked about, or, as Gaunilo puts it, I know him at least by 'species and genus'. But even here, of course, I cannot infer that the person who is being talked about actually exists, because the speaker might be telling a lie or simply making up a story about some fictional character. The only way, in fact,

<sup>1</sup> See *De Libero Arbitrio*, II. iii; *Pontifex*, p. 80; *De Trinitate*, xv. xii; *P.L.* xlii. 1074.

that I can be said to think of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' or have it 'in mind', is in the trivial sense that I take in 'the sound of the letters or syllables'. I do not know *what* they *mean*, nor indeed whether they have any meaning at all, nor, if they do have meaning, whether what they mean actually exists in reality. Thus we can distinguish the three following cases: (i) I understand the *words*, in the sense that I take them in without understanding what they mean, and, *a fortiori*, without understanding whether what they signify actually exists; (ii) I understand the words *as meaning something*, though without understanding whether what they mean actually exists; (iii) I understand the words *as meaning something that actually exists*. And Gaunilo's point is that the formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is 'understood' not in sense (iii), nor even in sense (ii), but in the trivial sense (i).

[5.] Anselm's argument is that, if 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is 'in the mind', it must also exist in reality, otherwise it would not be the greatest thing of all. But Gaunilo claims to have shown that it is not 'in the mind' in any way that would allow us to infer its actual existence. We should have to show that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' meant something, and we should also have to show that it did not exist in the mind in the same way as 'false and doubtful things' do. But the only way of proving this is precisely to prove that there exists something corresponding to the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. In other words, we should have to prove first of all 'that this greatest of all exists in reality somewhere'.<sup>1</sup> To sum up: We need to show that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' exists 'in the mind' in a different way from 'false and doubtful things', for we cannot infer from the fact that these latter exist 'in the mind' that they therefore exist in reality. And if we cannot show that it exists in the mind in a different way (such that it will allow an inference to its actual existence) then it must be *proved* that it exists in actual reality, just as we have to prove in the case of our ordinary concepts that they are instantiated in actual reality.

<sup>1</sup> p. 163.

[6.] Gaunilo now produces his celebrated example of the 'Lost Island'.<sup>1</sup> We can conceive of an island 'more excellent than all other lands', an island than which no more excellent can be thought. Now, on St. Anselm's premisses, this most excellent island must actually exist, for if it did not actually exist it would not be the most excellent island. But if someone argued in this way, says Gaunilo, we should think that either he was joking or that he was a complete fool.

The gist of Gaunilo's arguments, it will be noticed, is to claim that it is never possible to argue from the fact that we can conceive of something to the fact that that thing actually exists; or, that it is never possible to argue that because a concept is meaningful it is therefore true or instantiated. For every concept there is a distinction between its meaningfulness (its existence 'in the mind') and its actual instantiation in reality; the question of the instantiation of some concept is always a further question and always requires separate proof. Gaunilo, that is, is anticipating Kant's argument that existential propositions are always 'synthetic', in that 'exists' is not a predicate that can be contained analytically in the notion of any subject.

[7.] The same argument, Gaunilo says, avails against St. Anselm's argument in Chapter III of the *Proslogion*. If it is proved that there is some supreme being then we can say that it must exist necessarily, that is, it must exist in such a way that it cannot be thought not to exist. But we must first prove the existence of this being, and then we can infer 'everything else which necessarily cannot be wanting to what is greater and better than everything'.<sup>2</sup>

The latter part of this section is rather obscure. The drift of Gaunilo's argument seems to be that, in the weak sense of 'thinking' ('cogitare'), it is always possible to think of God as not existing, that is to say, 'God does not exist' is not a self-contradictory proposition. In this sense of 'think' I can think of God as not existing, just as I can think of myself as not existing. And if this is so, then when we say that God is such that He 'cannot be *thought* not to be', the term 'thought' here must have a different and stronger sense. St. Anselm, Gaunilo suggests, ought to say that God is such that He cannot be 'understood'

<sup>1</sup> p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> p. 165. See also Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* i, Q. ii, a. i.



(‘intelligere’) not to exist, ‘understood’ having the stronger sense of connoting the existence of its object. If this is indeed what Gaunilo means here it is a very interesting criticism for it brings out the point that the theist is committed to holding both that the proposition ‘God exists’ is not in one sense a logically necessary one (since it may be denied without self-contradiction) and yet that the conclusion of any proof of the existence of God must be that the proposition ‘God exists’ is, in some other sense, a logically necessary one (since the inconceivability of God’s non-existence is precisely what distinguishes God’s existence from the kind of existence that things in the world enjoy).

[8.] Gaunilo ends with a charming piece of praise for the *Proslogion* and its author. Even if there are weak points in St. Anselm’s arguments, nevertheless the rest of the book is of great value and should be accepted ‘with great respect and praise’.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 167.

## THE AUTHOR'S REPLY TO GAUNILO

[I.] ST ANSELM begins by remarking that he is replying to Gaunilo as an orthodox Christian ('catholicus'); that is, he is assuming that Gaunilo is a believer who knows by faith that God exists, and that he is not in the same position as the Fool. Thus St. Anselm can assume that Gaunilo accepts his major premiss, namely, that God is definable as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', though, as we shall see later, St. Anselm acknowledges that this premiss is also rationally justifiable to one who does not believe in God.

Gaunilo's main objection was that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is 'in the mind' merely in the way in which something which cannot be thought of as really existing is said to be 'in the mind';<sup>1</sup> and further that we cannot infer that a thing actually exists from the fact that it exists in the mind. Now, says Anselm, if Gaunilo's first objection is valid, it would mean either that the definition of God as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is false, or that we cannot form any notion of God at all. But no one believing in God could maintain either of these propositions; therefore Gaunilo's objections must be dismissed. This, as we have suggested, is an *ad hominem* argument against Gaunilo in that it assumes that, as a believer in God, Gaunilo must admit that the notion of God is not a meaningless one and that we must be able to form some idea of God. Later, as we have said, Anselm will attempt to argue on purely rational grounds that a meaning can be given to the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. Here, however, Anselm's point is that he ought not to have to prove to a Christian believer that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is meaningful or is 'in the mind', for, to use a contemporary Wittgensteinian term, it is part and parcel of the Christian 'language-game'.

St. Anselm now produces a wholly new variation on the original proof in Chapters II and III of the *Proslogion*. God is

<sup>1</sup> p. 169.

defined once again as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. Now if 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' had a beginning, then it would be less great than it would be if it had no beginning of its existence. 'That than which nothing greater can be thought', then, cannot have a beginning of its existence. This, however, is still on the conceptual level; Anselm is simply establishing a formal connexion between being 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' and 'not having a beginning', and he has done nothing yet to show that the former concept is instantiated in reality. Anselm's next move is to establish a connexion between 'not having a beginning' and 'not being able to be thought of as not existing', that is, to establish that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', since it does not have a beginning, exists necessarily or non-contingently. But if 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' must exist necessarily, then, if it can be thought of, or if it possibly exists, it must actually exist.<sup>1</sup>

This version seems to be a variation on the proof in Chapter III of the *Proslogion*. Instead of assuming, as he did in Chapter III, that to exist necessarily was greater than to exist contingently, St. Anselm here gives a reason for this, namely that necessary existents have no 'beginning' of their existence whereas contingent existents do. One may wonder, however, whether the new premiss, 'whatever has no beginning is greater than whatever has a beginning', is any more evident than the original premiss in Chapter III of the *Proslogion*. Does 'beginning' mean temporal beginning or beginning in time, so that Anselm's meaning is that eternal beings, beings that have not begun in time, are greater than temporal beings? If this

<sup>1</sup> Anselm seems here to equate necessity defined in terms of having no beginning, or, in the next section, in terms of non-spatio-temporality or non-compositeness, with necessity defined in logical terms as 'not being able to be thought of as not existing'. However, D. P. Henry, 'The *Proslogion* Proofs', pp. 150-1, notes: 'Boethius' "necessary beings"—the heavenly bodies and the eternal principles of things—are not . . . sufficient for Anselm, since the being which he has in mind must be unique.' Anselm wishes 'to exalt the being of "that than which nothing greater can be thought" above the multiplicity of the merely physically necessary, which thought can decompose and which hence, while "not possible not to be", can nevertheless be *thought* not to be. . . . There is thus only *one* being that is "not possible to-be-thought not to be", and it is greater than that which is "possible to-be-thought not to be".'

is what he means, then his equation of eternal beings with necessary beings is quite obviously invalid, for it is evident that an eternal being can be contingent. Or does 'beginning' mean 'coming into existence' in the sense that a thing comes actually to exist 'after' possibly existing, so that Anselm's premiss is that beings that come to exist are greater than those that do not need to come into actual existence? If this is what Anselm means, then it is difficult to see that this is any more evident than the premiss in Chapter III of the *Proslogion*, for the question remains whether it makes sense to speak of beings which do not need to come into existence.

As we have remarked, St. Anselm is here emphasizing the connexion between the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' and the notion of 'necessary existence'. Why then, it may be asked, does he not see that he could formulate a more economical proof by doing away with the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' altogether? Thus, one could define God straight off as 'that which cannot be thought not to exist' or 'that which necessarily exists'. And then, if it were admitted that this notion could be thought of, that is, that the notion of a necessary existent were *possible*, it would follow, as St. Anselm has already argued, that it must actually exist, for if that which cannot be thought not to exist can be thought of, then it must be thought to exist; or, if that which cannot not-be can be, then it must actually be. Why did not St. Anselm develop his argument in this way? As we have already suggested, the only answer must be that St. Anselm did not think of his proof as a simple conceptual analysis of the notion 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' or 'that which necessarily exists', but rather as a genuine inference or argument in which the premiss 'what exists in reality is greater than what exists in the mind', or 'what exists necessarily is greater than what exists contingently', is an absolutely indispensable element.

Anselm now gives another justification of the premiss in Chapter III of the *Proslogion*, this time trying to link contingency with spatio-temporality and compositeness; that is to say, he argues that whatever exists in space and time, and in such a way that it is composed of parts, exists in a contingent way. To prove then that 'that than which nothing greater can be

thought' exists necessarily, is ipso facto to prove that 'it does not exist as a whole in any particular place or at any particular time, but it exists as a whole at every time and in every place'.<sup>1</sup>

We know then, Anselm concludes, that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' must, if it exists, exist in such a way that it cannot be thought not to exist, and consequently we know that it has not had a beginning of its existence, nor is it a spatio-temporal being, nor one composed of parts. How can Gaunilo claim then that he cannot think of or understand 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'? Of course, we do not understand it *completely* or in a determinate way; but even to understand it partially or indirectly is still to understand something about it, just as to see daylight is to see the light of the sun although we do not see the sun itself directly.<sup>2</sup>

[II.] If 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' can be understood in this way then, Anselm goes on, it is 'in the mind', for to be understood and to be 'in the mind' are synonymous.<sup>3</sup> And, if it is 'in the mind', then it must exist in reality, since to exist in reality is greater than existing in the mind alone, so that it would be self-contradictory to say that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' exists in the mind alone (while admitting that to exist in reality is greater than to exist in the mind alone).

[III.] St. Anselm now considers Gaunilo's example of the 'Lost Island', which is meant to show that, from the notion of a 'most excellent' thing, we cannot infer that it exists in actual reality. I concede, says St. Anselm, that from the notion of the 'Lost Island', or the notion of anything else, for that matter, we cannot infer actual existence. It is only in the one unique case that this inference can be made, namely with the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'.

Anselm's reply to Gaunilo here, however, needs to be filled out in more detail to be satisfactory. Thus, for example, he would need to say that the notion of the 'most excellent'

<sup>1</sup> p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 173–4. St. Anselm's elaborate demonstration of this fairly obvious point affords an amusing illustration of his 'dialectical' style: 'Sicut enim quod cogitatur, cogitatione cogitatur, et quod cogitatione cogitatur, sicut cogitatur sic est in cogitatione: ita quod intelligitur intellectu intelligitur, et quod intellectu intelligitur sicut intelligitur ita est in intellectu.'

island is a notion of merely a *relative* 'greatest', for no matter how excellent or perfect or 'great' an island may be, it can never be so great that we cannot conceive of a greater, and it will certainly never be the most excellent or most perfect or 'greatest' being *absolutely speaking*. On St. Anselm's premisses, of course, an actually existing island will be greater or more perfect than one merely thought of, but this does not imply that there is an actually existing island. The case of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', however, is different, for here, so St. Anselm claims, we have the concept of something which is the 'greatest' *absolutely speaking*, something than which it is not possible in any way to think of a greater. And, St. Anselm goes on, if we can think of this then we must conclude that it exists necessarily; 'he who thinks of it, thinks of something which cannot be thought not to exist'.<sup>1</sup>

[IV.] St. Anselm next replies to Gaunilo's point that we ought not to say that God cannot be *thought* ('cogitare') not to exist, but rather that He cannot be *understood* ('intelligere') not to exist. This, says Anselm, would not help, because, if we use the word 'understand' only of direct and immediate knowledge of actually existing things, then we should have to say that nothing known to exist can be 'understood' not to exist, and then it could be said of many things besides God that they were such that they could not be understood not to exist, so that this (not being able to be understood not to exist) would not be a peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of God. Anselm, then, prefers to say that we can 'think' of things as not existing, even while we know that they do actually exist. Thus, things 'which have a beginning or end or which are made up of parts and . . . all those things which do not exist as a whole in a particular place or at a particular time, can be thought as not existing'.<sup>2</sup> That is to say, spatio-temporal and composite things are contingent. And Anselm concludes that God, not being a spatio-temporal and composite being, is non-contingent, or 'cannot be thought as not existing'.<sup>3</sup> As we have already seen, however, this conclusion does not follow, for a non-spatio-temporal and non-composite being might still be contingent.

In what sense, then, do we say that God cannot be thought

<sup>1</sup> p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

not to exist? Not just in the sense, Anselm replies, in which we 'cannot think of something as not existing while knowing that it does exist, since we cannot think of it as existing and not existing at the same time',<sup>1</sup> for this applies to things other than God; but also in the sense that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' cannot even be conceived not to exist. This latter applies to God alone, for with all other things, even though they exist they can still be thought of as not existing. But then, in what way can the Fool say that God does not exist? St. Anselm refers back to Chapter IV of the *Proslogion*, where the possibility of denying that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' actually exists is admitted and explained by saying that he who makes the denial does not really comprehend what the formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' means.

St. Anselm's reply here, however, is not wholly satisfactory for if the proposition 'God exists' is not a logically necessary one, then it can be denied without self-contradiction. In other words, it is possible to think that God does not exist. However, it might be argued that only after we have gone through St. Anselm's proof do we see then, *as a result of the proof*, that God cannot be thought not to exist, or, that the proposition 'God (that than which nothing greater can be thought) actually exists' is a logically necessary one. That is, we *prove* that the proposition 'God exists' is a logically necessary one. St. Anselm would have to give some such account as this in order to meet Gaunilo's objection fully.

[V.] In his argument Gaunilo used the formula 'that which is greater than everything' ('*maius omnibus*'), and assumed that it was equivalent to Anselm's 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. But, Anselm objects, the two formulas are not equivalent for the purpose of proving the existence of God. To illustrate this Anselm puts forward yet another variation of the *Proslogion* argument. In this version 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is defined as that which cannot be thought of as not existing. Now, 'what does not exist can possibly not exist, and what can not exist can be thought of as not existing.'<sup>2</sup> Therefore 'that than which nothing greater

<sup>1</sup> p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

can be thought' must actually exist. Indeed, St. Anselm concludes, 'it neither does not exist, nor can not exist, or be thought of as not existing.'<sup>1</sup> Now, he goes on, it is not evident that 'that which is greater than everything' (to adopt Gaunilo's formula) cannot be thought not to exist; that is to say, it is not immediately evident that, if 'that which is greater than everything' did not actually exist, then it would precisely not be 'that which is greater than everything'. One would, in fact, need to show that 'that which is greater than everything' was identical with 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', in order to prove that the former could not be said not actually to exist without self-contradiction.

[VI.] St. Anselm goes on to answer Gaunilo's objection that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' may be 'in the mind' merely in the way in which a 'false thing' is in the mind. Anselm replies that this is all that he needs for his argument to work, for all that is necessary to his argument is that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is 'in the mind'; we do not need to know at the outset that there is some being existing in reality which corresponds to this thought. All that is needed is that the notion 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' be meaningful, not that it be true.

[VII.] The argument here is obscure; however, the gist of it seems to be that we do not need to understand 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' *completely*. It is sufficient for St. Anselm's purpose if we understand the notion partially or to some extent, for to admit that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is not a clear and distinct notion is not to say that it is without any meaning at all. It may well be, St. Anselm concludes, that someone may be completely ignorant of what the term 'God' means, but no one can plausibly allege that he does not understand *at all* what 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' means.

[VIII.] St. Anselm now considers the important question of how it can be shown that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful notion to one who is not a Christian

<sup>1</sup> p. 181.



believer. Gaunilo had objected that, since by definition 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' signifies a being essentially different from any of the things within our experience, we can therefore have no notion of it at all nor can we get an idea of it from other things like it. Anselm replies, however, that we can form an idea of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' by reflecting upon the things within our experience. Thus, for example, we see that the things we know have a beginning and end; we acknowledge also that being subject to temporal conditions is a limitation or imperfection, and we can infer that if there were a thing which, though it had a beginning, did not have an end, it would be better than the things which have both beginning and end. And again, on the same principle, we can infer that what has neither beginning nor end is better or more perfect or 'greater' than either of the former two. Now, cannot we go on to infer that if a being existed such that it was not subject to temporal conditions at all—'that which does not lack anything at all nor is forced to change or move'—it would be better or more perfect or 'greater' still? This would, in fact, be a being so great that no greater could be thought. We can thus, by purely rational means appreciable by everyone, believers and unbelievers alike, show that the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful one. As St. Anselm puts it, 'In this way, therefore, the Fool, who does not accept the sacred authority [of Revelation] can easily be refuted if he denies that he can form an idea from other things of that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought.'<sup>1</sup> And this, in fact, chimes in with what St. Paul says about the possibility of reaching an idea of God by reflecting upon His creation (Rom. i. 20).<sup>2</sup>

The reasoning that St. Anselm uses here is very much like that used in the *Monologion* arguments for the existence of God, and it may seem, at first sight, that St. Anselm has landed himself in the paradoxical position of having to prove the existence of a supra-temporal being so great that there cannot be a conceivable greater in order to show that the main

<sup>1</sup> p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> A text frequently cited by Aquinas later on, to support his view that the existence of God is not known self-evidently but only by an *a posteriori* proof based on certain facts about the world.

premiss of the *Proslogion* arguments is meaningful. However, it is clear enough that St. Anselm's intention is simply to show that by a process of abstraction on temporal things, and by invoking the principle that being subject to temporal conditions is a metaphysical limitation or imperfection, we are enabled to see that the notion of a being so great that none greater may be conceived is a non-self-contradictory or logically possible or meaningful notion. But we still do not know whether this notion is realized or instantiated in actual reality; that, precisely, is the purpose of the *Proslogion* proof.

St. Anselm's reasoning here, as we have already indicated, rests upon the neo-Platonic principle that being subject to temporal conditions represents a metaphysical limitation or imperfection, and also upon the possibility of comparing temporal, eternal, and supra-temporal things as more and less perfect or great in an absolute sense. For St. Anselm these two assumptions were so evident that they needed no proof. In our examination of the *Proslogion*, however, we saw how difficult it was to justify them, and we must conclude here that St. Anselm does not succeed in giving an acceptable meaning to the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. For all that, St. Anselm was aware, as we have seen, of the necessity of showing that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' had a rational meaning appreciable by the unbeliever. For him the formula 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is not wholly derived from faith, as Barth and others have claimed, so that the *Proslogion* arguments would be conclusive only for those who already believe in God.

[IX.] In one sense, as Anselm remarked earlier, we cannot think of or understand what 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' means, in that we cannot think of the *thing in itself* signified by this description. But this does not prevent us from knowing that 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is a meaningful notion. We know, for example, what 'ineffable' means, even though we cannot specify *what* is ineffable; and we know what 'inconceivable' means, even though we cannot think of the 'object' that it means.

In fact, Anselm continues, one who utters the proposition 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' does not

exist' must assume that the notion of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought' is meaningful in order to be able to deny its existence. This argument, reminiscent of Meinong and the early Russell, is obviously invalid for it assumes that 'God does not exist' is logically similar to 'Unicorns do not exist', as though the atheist were saying that we know what it would be like for God to exist but that in fact He does not exist. But the atheist claims rather that 'God does not exist' must be interpreted in the same way as 'Square circles do not exist', where we are not denying actual existence of a possibly existing subject but rather denying that there can be any such subject at all.

[X.] In the final section St. Anselm indicates that the *Proslogion* proofs were meant not merely to prove the actual existence of 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', but also to prove certain of the attributes of God. If God is 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', then we must predicate of God 'whatever it can, absolutely speaking, be thought better to be than not to be'.<sup>1</sup> If God is the greatest conceivable being, then He must possess his attributes in the greatest conceivable way. For example, if God is defined as 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', and if it is greater to be goodness itself rather than merely to be a particular good thing, then God must be goodness itself. In this way, by retaining the major premiss of the *Proslogion* proof, 'God is that than which nothing greater can be thought', and by varying the minor premiss, 'It is greater to be *X* than not-*X*', we can prove all the attributes of God.

St. Anselm concludes with a polite bow towards Gaunilo. Since Gaunilo praised those parts of the *Proslogion* that seemed acceptable, it is clear that his criticisms were not made in any malicious spirit but with complete goodwill.

<sup>1</sup> p. 191.

PROSLOGION  
WITH  
A REPLY ON BEHALF OF THE FOOL  
*By* GAUNILO  
AND  
THE AUTHOR'S REPLY TO  
GAUNILO

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Several minor liberties have been taken in the translation. The formula 'that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought' and its variants have been hyphenated for the sake of convenience; the Fool of the Psalmist has been given a capital letter; italics have been added in a few passages to make the meaning clearer; and some supplementary words and phrases (enclosed in square brackets) have also been interpolated for the same purpose. Biblical quotations have been translated directly from St. Anselm's text which differs slightly from that of the Latin Vulgate version. References to the Psalms follow the Vulgate numbering which differs from that of the Hebrew texts followed by most other versions.

## PROOEMIUM

POSTQUAM opusculum quoddam velut exemplum meditandi de ratione fidei cogentibus me precibus quorundam fratrum in persona alicuius tacite secum ratiocinando quæ nesciat investigantis edidi: considerans illud esse multorum concatenatione contextum argumentorum, coepi mecum quærere, si forte posset inveniri unum argumentum, quod nullo alio ad se probandum quam se solo indigeret, et solum ad astruendum quia deus vere est, et quia est summum bonum nullo alio indigens, et quo omnia indigent ut sint et ut bene sint, et quæcumque de divina credimus substantia, sufficeret. Ad quod cum sæpe studioseque cogitationem converterem, atque aliquando mihi videretur iam posse capi quod quærebam, aliquando mentis aciem omnino fugeret: tandem desperans volui cessare velut ab inquisitione rei quam inveniri esset impossibile. Sed cum illam cogitationem, ne mentem meam frustra occupando ab aliis in quibus proficere possem impediret, penitus a me vellem excludere: tunc magis ac magis nolenti et defendenti se coepit cum importunitate quadam ingerere. Cum igitur quadam die vehementer eius importunitati resistendo fatigarer, in ipso cogitationum conflictu sic se obtulit quod desperaveram, ut studiose cogitationem amplecterer, quam sollicitus repellebam.

Aestimans igitur quod me gaudebam invenisse, si scriptum esset, alicui legenti placiturum: de hoc ipso et de quibusdam aliis sub persona conantis erigere mentem suam ad contemplandum deum et quærentis intelligere quod credit, subditum scripsi opusculum. Et quoniam nec istud nec illud cuius supra memini dignum libri nomine aut cui auctoris præponeretur nomen iudicabam, nec tamen eadem sine aliquo titulo, quo aliquem in cuius manus venirent quodam modo ad se legendum

## PREFACE

AFTER I had published, at the pressing entreaties of several of my brethren, a certain short tract [the *Monologion*] as an example of meditation on the meaning of faith from the point of view of one seeking, through silent reasoning within himself, things he knows not—reflecting that this was made up of a connected chain of many arguments, I began to wonder if perhaps it might be possible to find one single argument that for its proof required no other save itself, and that by itself would suffice to prove that God really exists, that He is the supreme good needing no other and is He whom all things have need of for their being and well-being, and also to prove whatever we believe about the Divine Being. But as often and as diligently as I turned my thoughts to this, sometimes it seemed to me that I had almost reached what I was seeking, sometimes it eluded my acutest thinking completely, so that finally, in desperation, I was about to give up what I was looking for as something impossible to find. However, when I had decided to put aside this idea altogether, lest by uselessly occupying my mind it might prevent other ideas with which I could make some progress, then, in spite of my unwillingness and my resistance to it, it began to force itself upon me more and more pressingly. So it was that one day when I was quite worn out with resisting its importunacy, there came to me, in the very conflict of my thoughts, what I had despaired of finding, so that I eagerly grasped the notion which in my distraction I had been rejecting.

Judging, then, that what had given me such joy to discover would afford pleasure, if it were written down, to anyone who might read it, I have written the following short tract dealing with this question as well as several others, from the point of view of one trying to raise his mind to contemplate God and seeking to understand what he believes. In my opinion, neither this tract nor the other I mentioned before deserves to be called a book or to carry its author's name, and yet I did not think they should be sent forth without some title (by which, so to speak, they might invite those into whose hands they should come, to read

invitarent, dimittenda putabam: unicuique suum dedi titulum, ut prius *Exemplum meditandi de ratione fidei*, et sequens *Fides quaerens intellectum* diceretur.

Sed cum iam a pluribus cum his titulis utrumque transcriptum esset, coegerunt me plures et maxime reverendus archiepiscopus Lugdunensis, HUGO nomine, fungens in Gallia legatione Apostolica, qui mihi hoc ex Apostolica praecepit auctoritate, ut nomen meum illis praecriberem. Quod ut aptius fieret, illud quidem *Monologion*, id est soliloquium, istud vero *Proslogion*, id est alloquium, nominavi.

them); so I have given to each its title, the first being called *An Example of Meditation on the Meaning of Faith*, and the sequel *Faith in Quest of Understanding*.

However, as both of them, under these titles, had already been copied out by several readers, a number of people (above all the reverend Archbishop of Lyons, Hugh, apostolic delegate to Gaul, who commanded me by his apostolic authority) have urged me to put my name to them. For the sake of greater convenience I have named the first book *Monologion*, that is, a soliloquy; and the other *Proslogion*, that is, an allocution.



## CAPITULA

- I. Excitatio mentis ad contemplandum deum.
- II. Quod vere sit deus.
- III. Quod non possit cogitari non esse.
- IV. Quomodo 'insipiens dixit in corde', quod cogitari non potest.
- V. Quod deus sit quidquid melius est esse quam non esse; et solus existens per se omnia alia faciat de nihilo.
- VI. Quomodo sit sensibilis, cum non sit corpus.
- VII. Quomodo sit omnipotens, cum multa non possit.
- VIII. Quomodo sit misericors et impassibilis.
- IX. Quomodo totus iustus et summe iustus parcat malis; et quod iuste misereatur malis.
- X. Quomodo iuste puniat et iuste parcat malis.
- XI. Quomodo 'universæ viæ domini misericordia et veritas', et tamen 'iustus dominus in omnibus viis suis'.
- XII. Quod deus sit ipsa vita qua vivit; et sic de similibus.
- XIII. Quomodo solus sit incircumscriptus et æternus, cum alii spiritus sint incircumscripti et æterni.
- XIV. Quomodo et cur videtur et non videtur deus a quærentibus eum.
- XV. Quod maior sit quam cogitari possit.
- XVI. Quod hæc sit 'lux inaccessibilis', quam 'inhabitat'.
- XVII. Quod in deo sit harmonia, odor, sapor, lenitas, pulchritudo, suo ineffabili modo.
- XVIII. Quod in deo nec in æternitate eius, quæ ipse est, nullæ sint partes.
- XIX. Quod non sit in loco aut tempore, sed omnia sint in illo.
- XX. Quod sit ante et ultra omnia etiam æterna.
- XXI. An hoc sit 'sæculum sæculi' sive 'sæcula sæculorum'.
- XXII. Quod solus sit quod est et qui est.

## CONTENTS

- I. A Rousing of the mind to the contemplation of God.
- II. That God truly exists.
- III. That God cannot be thought not to exist.
- IV. How 'the Fool said in his heart' what cannot be thought.
- V. That God is whatever it is better to be than not to be, and that existing through Himself alone He makes all other beings from nothing.
- VI. How He is perceptive although He is not a body.
- VII. How He is omnipotent although He cannot do many things.
- VIII. How He is both merciful and impassible.
- IX. How the all-just and supremely just One spares the wicked and justly has mercy on the wicked.
- X. How He justly punishes and justly spares the wicked.
- XI. How 'all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth', and yet how 'the Lord is just in all His ways'.
- XII. That God is the very life by which He lives and that the same holds for like attributes.
- XIII. How He alone is limitless and eternal, although other spirits are also limitless and eternal.
- XIV. How and why God is both seen and not seen by those seeking Him.
- XV. How He is greater than can be thought.
- XVI. That this is the 'inaccessible light' in which He 'dwells'.
- XVII. That harmony, fragrance, sweetness, softness, and beauty are in God according to His own ineffable manner.
- XVIII. That there are no parts in God or in His eternity which He is.
- XIX. That He is not in place or time but all things are in Him.
- XX. That He is before and beyond even all eternal things.
- XXI. Whether this is the 'age of the age' or the 'ages of the ages'.
- XXII. That He alone is what He is and who He is.

- XXIII.** Quod hoc bonum sit pariter pater et filius et spiritus sanctus; et hoc sit 'unum necessarium', quod est omne et totum et solum bonum.
- XXIV.** Coniectatio quale et quantum sit hoc bonum.
- XXV.** Quæ et quanta bona sint fruentibus eo.
- XXVI.** An hoc sit 'gaudium plenum' quod promittit dominus.

- XXIII. That this good is equally Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and that this is the one necessary being which is altogether and wholly and solely good.
- XXIV. A speculation as to what kind and how great this good is.
- XXV. Which goods belong to those who enjoy this good and how great they are.
- XXVI. Whether this is the 'fulness of joy' which the Lord promises.

# PROSLOGION

## CAPITULUM I

### *Excitatio mentis ad contemplandum deum*

EIA nunc, homuncio, fuge paululum occupationes tuas, absconde te modicum a tumultuosis cogitationibus tuis. Abice nunc onerosas curas, et postpone laboriosas distentiones tuas. Vaca aliquantulum deo, et requiesce aliquantulum in eo. 'Intra in cubiculum' mentis tuæ, exclude omnia præter deum et quæ te iuvent ad quærendum eum, et 'clauso ostio' quære eum. Dic nunc, totum 'cor meum', dic nunc deo: 'Quæro vultum tuum; vultum tuum, domine, requiro'.

Eia nunc ergo tu, domine deus meus, doce cor meum ubi et quomodo te quærat, ubi et quomodo te inveniatur. Domine, si hic non es, ubi te quæram absentem? Si autem ubique es, cur non video præsentem? Sed certe habitas 'lucem inaccessibilem'. Et ubi est lux inaccessibilis? Aut quomodo accedam ad lucem inaccessibilem? Aut quis me ducet et inducet in illam, ut videam te in illa? Deinde quibus signis, qua facie te quæram? Numquam te vidi, domine deus meus, non novi faciem tuam. Quid faciet, altissime domine, quid faciet iste tuus longinquus exsul? Quid faciet servus tuus anxius amore tui et longe projectus 'a facie tua'? Anhelat videre te, et nimis abest illi facies tua. Accedere ad te desiderat, et inaccessibilis est habitatio tua. Invenire te cupit, et nescit locum tuum. Quærere te affectat, et ignorat vultum tuum. Domine, deus meus es, et dominus meus es, et numquam te vidi. Tu me fecisti et refecisti, et omnia mea bona tu mihi contulisti, et nondum novi te. Denique ad te videndum factus sum, et nondum feci propter quod factus sum.

# PROSLOGION

## CHAPTER I

### *A Rousing of the mind to the contemplation of God*

COME now, insignificant man, fly for a moment from your affairs, escape for a little while from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside now your weighty cares and leave your wearisome toils. Abandon yourself for a little to God and rest for a little in Him. Enter into the inner chamber of your soul, shut out everything save God and what can be of help in your quest for Him and having locked the door seek Him out [Matt. vi. 6]. Speak now, my whole heart, speak now to God: 'I seek Your countenance, O Lord, Your countenance I seek' [Ps. xxvi. 8].

Come then, Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek You, where and how to find You. Lord, if You are not present here, where, since You are absent, shall I look for You? On the other hand, if You are everywhere why then, since You are present, do I not see You? But surely You dwell in 'light inaccessible' [1 Tim. vi. 16]. And where is this inaccessible light, or how can I approach the inaccessible light? Or who shall lead me and take me into it that I may see You in it? Again, by what signs, under what aspect, shall I seek You? Never have I seen You, Lord my God, I do not know Your face. What shall he do, most high Lord, what shall this exile do, far away from You as he is? What shall Your servant do, tormented by love of You and yet cast off 'far from Your face' [Ps. i. 13]? He yearns to see You and Your countenance is too far away from him. He desires to come close to You, and Your dwelling place is inaccessible; he longs to find You and does not know where You are; he is eager to seek You out and he does not know Your countenance. Lord, You are my God and my Lord, and never have I seen You. You have created me and re-created me and You have given me all the good things I possess, and still I do not know You. In fine, I was made in order to see You, and I have not yet accomplished what I was made for.

O misera sors hominis, cum hoc perdidit ad quod factus est. O durus et dirus casus ille! Heu, quid perdidit et quid invenit, quid abscessit et quid remansit! Perdidit beatitudinem ad quam factus est, et invenit miseriam propter quam factus non est. Abscessit sine quo nihil felix est, et remansit quod per se nonnisi miserum est. 'Manducabat' tunc 'homo panem angelorum' quem nunc esurit, manducat nunc 'panem dolorum', quem tunc nesciebat. Heu publicus luctus hominum, universalis planctus filiorum Adæ! Ille ructabat saturitate, nos suspiramus esurie. Ille abundabat, nos mendicamus. Ille feliciter tenebat et misere deseruit, nos infeliciter egemus et miserabiliter desideramus, et heu, vacui remanemus. Cur non nobis custodivit cum facile posset, quo tam graviter careremus? Quare sic nobis obseravit lucem, et obduxit nos tenebris? Ut quid nobis abstulit vitam, et inflixit mortem? Aerumnosi, unde sumus expulsi, quo sumus impuls! Unde præcipitati, quo obruti! A patria in exilium, a visione dei in cæcitatem nostram. A iucunditate immortalitatis in amaritudinem et horrorem mortis. Misera mutatio! De quanto bono in quantum malum! Grave damnum, gravis dolor, grave totum.

Sed heu me miserum, unum de aliis miseris filiis Evæ elongatis a deo, quid incepti, quid effeci? Quo tendebam, quo deveni? Ad quid aspirabam, in quibus suspiro? 'Quæsi vi bona' 'et ecce turbatio'! Tendebam in deum, et offendi in me ipsum. Requiem quærebam in secreto meo, et 'tribulationem et dolorem inveni' in intimis meis. Volebam ridere a gaudio mentis meæ, et cogor rugire 'a gemitu cordis mei'. Sperabatur lætitia, et ecce unde densentur suspiria!

Et o 'tu, domine, usquequo'? 'Usquequo, domine, oblivisceris' nos, 'usquequo avertis faciem tuam' a nobis? Quando respicies et exaudies nos? Quando illuminabis oculos nostros, et

How wretched man's lot is when he has lost that for which he was made! Oh how hard and cruel was that Fall! Alas, what has man lost and what has he found? What did he lose and what remains to him? He lost the blessedness for which he was made, and he found the misery for which he was not made. That without which nothing is happy has gone from him and that which by itself is nothing but misery remains to him. Once 'man ate the bread of angels' [Ps. lxxvii. 25], for which now he hungers; now he eats 'the bread of sorrow' [Ps. cxxvi. 2], which then he knew nothing of. Alas the common grief of mankind, alas the universal lamentation of the children of Adam! He groaned with fullness; we sigh with hunger. He was prosperous; we go begging. He in his happiness had possessions and in his misery abandoned them; we in our unhappiness go without and miserably do we yearn and, alas, we remain empty. Why, since it was easy for him, did he not keep for us that which we lack so much? Why did he deprive us of light and surround us with darkness? Why did he take life away from us and inflict death upon us? Poor wretches that we are, whence have we been expelled and whither are we driven? Whence have we been cast down and whither buried? From our homeland into exile; from the vision of God into our present blindness; from the joy of immortality into the bitterness and horror of death. Oh wretched change from so great a good to so great an evil! What a grievous loss, a grievous sorrow, utterly grievous!

Alas, unfortunate that I am, one of the miserable children of Eve, separated from God. What have I undertaken? What have I actually done? Where was I going? Where have I come to? To what was I aspiring? For what do I yearn? 'I sought goodness' [Ps. cxxi. 9] and, lo, 'there is confusion' [Jer. xiv. 19]. I yearned for God, and I was in my own way. I sought peace within myself and 'I have found tribulation and sadness' in my heart of hearts [Ps. cxiv. 3]. I wished to laugh from out the happiness of my soul, and 'the sobbing of my heart' [Ps. xxxvii. 9] makes me cry out. I hoped for gladness and, lo, my sighs come thick and fast.

And You, 'O Lord, how long' [Ps. vi. 4]? How long, Lord, will You be unmindful of us? 'How long will You turn Your countenance' from us [Ps. xii. 1]? When will You look upon us



ostendes nobis 'faciem tuam'? Quando restitues te nobis? Respice, domine, exaudi, illumina nos, ostende nobis teipsum. Restitue te nobis, ut bene sit nobis, sine quo tam male est nobis. Miserare labores et conatus nostros ad te, qui nihil valemus sine te. Invitas nos, 'adiuva nos'. Obsecro, domine, ne desperem suspirando, sed respirem sperando. Obsecro, domine, amari-catum est cor meum sua desolatione, indulca illud tua consola-tione. Obsecro, domine, esuriens incepti quærere te, ne desinam ieiunus de te. Famelicus accessi, ne recedam impastus. Pauper veni ad divitem, miser ad misericordem; ne redeam vacuus et contemptus. Et si 'antequam comedam suspiro', da vel post suspiria quod comedam. Domine, incurvatus non possum nisi deorsum aspicere, erige me ut possim sursum intendere. 'Iniqui-tates meæ supergressæ caput meum' obvolvunt me, 'et sicut onus grave' gravant me. Evolve me, exonera me, ne 'urgeat puteus' earum 'os suum super me'. Liceat mihi suspicere lucem tuam, vel de longe, vel de profundo. Doce me quærere te, et ostende te quærenti; quia nec quærere te possum nisi tu doceas, nec invenire nisi te ostendas. Quæram te desiderando, desiderem quærendo. Inveniam amando, amem inveniando.

Fateor, domine, et gratias ago, quia creasti in me hanc imaginem tuam, ut tui memor te cogitem, te amem. Sed sic est abolita attritione vitiorum, sic est offuscata fumo pecca-torum, ut non possit facere ad quod facta est, nisi tu renoves et reformes eam. Non tento, domine, penetrare altitudinem tuam, quia nullatenus comparo illi intellectum meum; sed desidero aliquatenus intelligere veritatem tuam, quam credit et amat cor meum. Neque enim quæro intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. Nam et hoc credo: quia 'nisi credidero, non in-telligam'.

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and hear us [Ps. xii. 4]? When will You enlighten our eyes and show 'Your countenance' to us [Ps. lxxix. 4]? When will You give Yourself again to us? Look upon us, Lord; hear us, enlighten us, show Yourself to us. Give Yourself to us that it may be well with us, for without You it goes so ill for us. Have pity upon our efforts and our strivings towards You, for we can avail nothing without You. You call to us, 'so help us' [Ps. lxxviii. 9]. I beseech You, Lord, let me not go sighing hopelessly, but make me breathe hopefully again. My heart is made bitter by its desolation; I beseech You, Lord, sweeten it by Your consolation. I set out hungry to look for You; I beseech You, Lord, do not let me depart from You fasting. I came to You as one famished; do not let me go without food. Poor, I have come to one who is rich. Unfortunate, I have come to one who is merciful. Do not let me return scorned and empty-handed. And if now I sigh before I eat [Job iii. 4], give me to eat after my sighs. Lord, bowed down as I am, I can only look downwards; raise me up that I may look upwards. 'My sins are heaped up over my head'; they cover me over and 'like a heavy load' crush me down [Ps. xxxvii. 5]. Save me, disburden me, 'lest their pit close its mouth over me' [Ps. lxviii. 16]. Let me discern Your light whether it be from afar or from the depths. Teach me to seek You, and reveal Yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek You if You do not teach me how, nor find You unless You reveal Yourself. Let me seek You in desiring You; let me desire You in seeking You; let me find You in loving You; let me love You in finding You.

I acknowledge, Lord, and I give thanks that You have created Your image in me, so that I may remember You, think of You, love You. But this image is so effaced and worn away by vice, so darkened by the smoke of sin, that it cannot do what it was made to do unless You renew it and reform it. I do not try, Lord, to attain Your lofty heights, because my understanding is in no way equal to it. But I do desire to understand Your truth a little, that truth that my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand. For I believe this also, that 'unless I believe, I shall not understand' [Is. vii. 9].

## CAPITULUM II

*Quod vere sit deus*

ERGO, domine, qui das fidei intellectum, da mihi, ut quantum scis expedire intelligam, quia es sicut credimus, et hoc es quod credimus. Et quidem credimus te esse aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit. An ergo non est aliqua talis natura, quia 'dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est deus'? Sed certe ipse idem insipiens, cum audit hoc ipsum quod dico: 'aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest', intelligit quod audit; et quod intelligit in intellectu eius est, etiam si non intelligat illud esse. Aliud enim est rem esse in intellectu, aliud intelligere rem esse. Nam cum pictor præcogitat quæ factururus est, habet quidem in intellectu, sed nondum intelligit esse quod nondum fecit. Cum vero iam pinxit, et habet in intellectu et intelligit esse quod iam fecit. Convincitur ergo etiam insipiens esse vel in intellectu aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest, quia hoc cum audit intelligit, et quidquid intelligitur in intellectu est. Et certe id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest cogitari esse et in re, quod maius est. Si ergo id quo maius cogitari non potest, est in solo intellectu: id ipsum quo maius cogitari non potest, est quo maius cogitari potest. Sed certe hoc esse non potest. Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid quo maius cogitari non valet, et in intellectu et in re.

## CHAPTER II

*That God truly exists*

WELL then, Lord, You who give understanding to faith, grant me that I may understand, as much as You see fit, that You exist as we believe You to exist, and that You are what we believe You to be. Now we believe that You are something than which nothing greater can be thought. Or can it be that a thing of such a nature does not exist, since 'the Fool has said in his heart, there is no God' [Ps. xiii. 1, lii. 1]? But surely, when this same Fool hears what I am speaking about, namely, 'something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought', he understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his mind, even if he does not understand that it actually exists. For it is one thing for an object to exist in the mind, and another thing to understand that an object actually exists. Thus, when a painter plans beforehand what he is going to execute, he has [the picture] in his mind, but he does not yet think that it actually exists because he has not yet executed it. However, when he has actually painted it, then he both has it in his mind and understands that it exists because he has now made it. Even the Fool, then, is forced to agree that something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought exists in the mind, since he understands this when he hears it, and whatever is understood is in the mind. And surely that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought cannot exist in the mind alone. For if it exists solely in the mind even, it can be thought to exist in reality also, which is greater. If then that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists in the mind alone, this same that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought is that-than-which-a-greater-can-be-thought. But this is obviously impossible. Therefore there is absolutely no doubt that something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists both in the mind and in reality.

## CAPITULUM III

*Quod non possit cogitari non esse*

QUOD utique sic vere est, ut nec cogitari possit non esse. Nam potest cogitari esse aliquid, quod non possit cogitari non esse; quod maius est quam quod non esse cogitari potest. Quare si id quo maius nequit cogitari, potest cogitari non esse: id ipsum quo maius cogitari nequit, non est id quo maius cogitari nequit; quod convenire non potest. Sic ergo vere est aliquid quo maius cogitari non potest, ut nec cogitari possit non esse.

Et hoc es tu, domine deus noster. Sic ergo vere es, domine deus meus, ut nec cogitari possis non esse. Et merito. Si enim aliqua mens posset cogitare aliquid melius te, ascenderet creatura super creatorem, et iudicaret de creatore; quod valde est absurdum. Et quidem quidquid est aliud præter te solum, potest cogitari non esse. Solus igitur verissime omnium, et ideo maxime omnium habes esse: quia quidquid aliud est non sic vere, et idcirco minus habet esse. Cur itaque 'dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est deus', cum tam in promptu sit rationali menti te maxime omnium esse? Cur, nisi quia stultus et insipiens?

## CAPITULUM IV

*Quomodo insipiens dixit in corde, quod cogitari non potest*

VERUM quomodo dixit in corde quod cogitare non potuit; aut quomodo cogitare non potuit quod dixit in corde, cum idem sit dicere in corde et cogitare? Quod si vere, immo quia vere et cogitavit quia dixit in corde, et non dixit in corde quia cogitare non potuit: non uno tantum modo dicitur aliquid in corde vel

## CHAPTER III

*That God cannot be thought not to exist*

AND certainly this being so truly exists that it cannot be even thought not to exist. For something can be thought to exist that cannot be thought not to exist, and this is greater than that which can be thought not to exist. Hence, if that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought can be thought not to exist, then that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought is not the same as that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, which is absurd. Something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists so truly then, that it cannot be even thought not to exist.

And You, Lord our God, are this being. You exist so truly, Lord my God, that You cannot even be thought not to exist. And this is as it should be, for if some intelligence could think of something better than You, the creature would be above its creator and would judge its creator—and that is completely absurd. In fact, everything else there is, except You alone, can be thought of as not existing. You alone, then, of all things most truly exist and therefore of all things possess existence to the highest degree; for anything else does not exist as truly, and so possesses existence to a lesser degree. Why then did 'the Fool say in his heart, there is no God' [Ps. xiii. 1, lii. 1] when it is so evident to any rational mind that You of all things exist to the highest degree? Why indeed, unless because he was stupid and a fool?

## CHAPTER IV

*How 'the Fool said in his heart' what cannot be thought*

How indeed has he 'said in his heart' what he could not think; or how could he not think what he 'said in his heart', since to 'say in one's heart' and to 'think' are the same? But if he really (indeed, since he really) both thought because he 'said in his heart' and did not 'say in his heart' because he could not think, there is not only one sense in which something is 'said in one's heart' or thought. For in one sense a thing is

cogitatur. Aliter enim cogitatur res cum vox eam significans cogitatur, aliter cum id ipsum quod res est intelligitur. Illo itaque modo potest cogitari deus non esse, isto vero minime. Nullus quippe intelligens id quod deus est, potest cogitare quia deus non est, licet hæc verba dicat in corde, aut sine ulla aut cum aliqua extranea significatione. Deus enim est id quo maius cogitari non potest. Quod qui bene intelligit, utique intelligit id ipsum sic esse, ut nec cogitatione queat non esse. Qui ergo intelligit sic esse deum, nequit eum non esse cogitare.

Gratias tibi, bone domine, gratias tibi, quia quod prius credidi te donante, iam sic intelligo te illuminante, ut si te esse nolim credere, non possim non intelligere.

#### CAPITULUM V

*Quod deus sit quidquid melius est esse quam non esse; et solus existens per se omnia alia faciat de nihilo*

QUID igitur es, domine deus, quo nil maius valet cogitari? Sed quid es nisi id quod summum omnium solum existens per seipsum, omnia alia fecit de nihilo? Quidquid enim hoc non est, minus est quam cogitari possit. Sed hoc de te cogitari non potest. Quod ergo bonum deest summo bono, per quod est omne bonum? Tu es itaque iustus, verax, beatus, et quidquid melius est esse quam non esse. Melius namque est esse iustum quam non iustum, beatum quam non beatum.

#### CAPITULUM VI

*Quomodo sit sensibilis, cum non sit corpus*

VERUM cum melius sit esse sensibilem, omnipotentem, misericordem, impassibilem quam non esse: quomodo es sensibilis,

HEART

thought when the word signifying it is thought; in another sense when the very object which the thing is is understood.

7 In the first sense, then, God can be thought not to exist, but not at all in the second sense. No one, indeed, understanding what God is can think that God does not exist, even though he may say these words in his heart either without any [objective] signification or with some peculiar signification. For God is that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought. Whoever really understands this understands clearly that this same being so exists that not even in thought can it not exist. Thus whoever understands that God exists in such a way cannot think of Him as not existing.

I give thanks, good Lord, I give thanks to You, since what I believed before through Your free gift I now so understand through Your illumination, that if I did not want to *believe* that You existed, I should nevertheless be unable not to *understand* it.

## CHAPTER V

*That God is whatever it is better to be than not to be and that, existing through Himself alone, He makes all other beings from nothing*

WHAT then are You, Lord God, You than whom nothing greater can be thought? But what are You save that supreme being, existing through Yourself alone, who made everything else from nothing? For whatever is not this is less than that which can be thought of; but this cannot be thought about You. What goodness, then, could be wanting to the supreme good, through which every good exists? Thus You are just, truthful, happy, and whatever it is better to be than not to be—for it is better to be just rather than unjust, and happy rather than unhappy.

## CHAPTER VI

*How He is perceptive although He is not a body*

BUT since it is better to be perceptive, omnipotent, merciful, impassible, than not to be so, how are You able to perceive if



si non es corpus; aut omnipotens, si omnia non potes; aut misericors simul et impassibilis? Nam si sola corporea sunt sensibilia, quoniam sensus circa corpus et in corpore sunt: quomodo es sensibilis, cum non sis corpus sed summus spiritus, qui corpore melior est?

Sed si sentire non nisi cognoscere aut non nisi ad cognoscendum est—qui enim sentit cognoscit secundum sensuum proprietatem, ut per visum colores, per gustum sapes—non inconvenienter dicitur aliquo modo sentire, quidquid aliquo modo cognoscit. Ergo domine, quamvis non sis corpus, vere tamen eo modo summe sensibilis es, quo summe omnia cognoscis, non quo animal corporeo sensu cognoscit.

## CAPITULUM VII

*Quomodo sit omnipotens, cum multa non possit*

SED et omnipotens quomodo es, si omnia non potes? Aut si non potes corrumpi nec mentiri nec facere verum esse falsum, ut quod factum est non esse factum, et plura similiter: quomodo potes omnia?

An hæc posse non est potentia, sed impotentia? Nam qui hæc potest, quod sibi non expedit et quod non debet potest. Quæ quanto magis potest, tanto magis adversitas et perversitas possunt in illum, et ipse minus contra illas. Qui ergo sic potest, non potentia potest, sed impotentia. Non enim ideo dicitur posse, quia ipse possit, sed quia sua impotentia facit aliud in se posse; sive aliquo alio genere loquendi, sicut multa improprie dicuntur. Ut cum ponimus 'esse' pro 'non esse', et 'facere' pro eo quod est 'non facere', aut pro 'nihil facere'. Nam sæpe dicimus ei qui rem aliquam esse negat: sic est quemadmodum dicis esse, cum magis proprie videatur dici: sic non est quemadmodum dicis non esse. Item dicimus: iste sedet sicut ille facit, aut: iste quiescit sicut ille facit, cum 'sedere' sit quiddam non

You are not a body; or how are You omnipotent if You are not able to do everything; or how are You merciful and impassible at the same time? For if only corporeal things are capable of perception, since the senses are involved with the body and in the body, how are You perceptive, since You are not a body but the supreme spirit who is better than any body? But if to perceive is nothing else than to know, or if it is directed to knowing (for he who perceives knows according to the appropriate sense, as, for example, colours are known by sight and flavours through taste), one can say not inappropriately that whatever in any way knows also in some way perceives. So it is, Lord, that although You are not a body You are supremely perceptive, in the sense that You know supremely all things and not in the sense in which an animal knows through a bodily sense-faculty.

## CHAPTER VII

*How He is omnipotent although He cannot do many things*

AGAIN, how are You omnipotent if You cannot do all things? But, how can You do all things if You cannot be corrupted, or tell lies, or make the true into the false (such as to undo what has been done), and many similar things? Or is the ability to do these things not power but impotence? For he who can do these things can do what is not good for himself and what he ought not to do. And the more he can do these things, the more power adversity and perversity have over him and the less he has against them. He, therefore, who can do these things can do them not by power but by impotence. It is said, then, that he 'can', not because he himself can do them but because his impotence gives another power against him. Or it is said in some other manner of speaking, in the sense in which many words are used improperly, as, for example, when we use 'to be' for 'not to be', and 'to do' for 'not to do' or for 'to do nothing'. Thus we often say to someone who denies that some thing exists: 'It is as you say it is', although it would seem much more proper to say, 'It is not as you say it is not'. Again, we say 'This man is sitting', just as we say 'That man is doing [something]'; or we say 'This man is resting', just as we say 'That man is doing

facere et 'quiescere' sit nihil facere. Sic itaque cum quis dicitur habere potentiam faciendi aut patiendi quod sibi non expedit aut quod non debet, impotentia intelligitur per potentiam; quia quo plus habet hanc potentiam, eo adversitas et perversitas in illum sunt potentiores, et ille contra eas impotentior. Ergo domine deus, inde verius es omnipotens, quia nihil potes per impotentiam, et nihil potest contra te.

## CAPITULUM VIII

*Quomodo sit misericors et impassibilis*

SED et misericors simul et impassibilis quomodo es? Nam si es impassibilis, non compateris; si non compateris, non est tibi miserum cor ex compassione miseri, quod est esse misericordem. At si non es misericors, unde miseris est tanta consolatio?

Quomodo ergo es et non es misericors, domine, nisi quia es misericors secundum nos, et non es secundum te? Es quippe secundum nostrum sensum, et non es secundum tuum. Etenim cum tu respicis nos miseros, nos sentimus misericordis effectum, tu non sentis affectum. Et misericors es igitur, quia miseros salvas et peccatoribus tuis parcis; et misericors non es, quia nulla miseriae compassione afficeris.

## CAPITULUM IX

*Quomodo totus iustus et summe iustus parcat malis; et quod iuste misereatur malis*

VERUM malis quomodo parcis, si es totus iustus et summe iustus? Quomodo enim totus et summe iustus facit aliquid non iustum? Aut quæ iustitia est merenti mortem æternam dare

[something']. But 'to sit' is *not* to do something, and 'to rest' is to do *nothing*. In the same way, then, when someone is said to have the 'power' of doing or suffering something which is not to his advantage or which he ought not to do, then by 'power' here we mean 'impotence', for the more he has this 'power', the more adversity and perversity have power over him and the more is he powerless against them. Therefore, Lord God, You are the more truly omnipotent since You can do nothing through impotence and nothing can have power against You.

## CHAPTER VIII

*How He is both merciful and impassible*

BUT how are You at once both merciful and impassible? For if You are impassible You do not have any compassion; and if You have no compassion Your heart is not sorrowful from compassion with the sorrowful, which is what being merciful is. But if You are not merciful whence comes so much consolation for the sorrowful?

How, then, are You merciful and not merciful, O Lord, unless it be that You are merciful in relation to us and not in relation to Yourself? In fact, You are [merciful] according to our way of looking at things and not according to Your way. For when You look upon us in our misery it is we who feel the effect of Your mercy, but You do not experience the feeling. Therefore You are both merciful because You save the sorrowful and pardon sinners against You; and You are not merciful because You do not experience any feeling of compassion for misery.

## CHAPTER IX

*How the all-just and supremely just One spares the wicked and justly has mercy on the wicked*

BUT how do You spare the wicked if You are all-just and supremely just? For how does the all-just and supremely just One do something that is unjust? Or what kind of justice is it to give everlasting life to him who merits eternal death?

vitam sempiternam? Unde ergo, bone deus, bone bonis et malis, unde tibi salvare malos, si hoc non est iustum, et tu non facis aliquid non iustum?

An quia bonitas tua est incomprehensibilis, latet hoc in luce inaccessibili quam inhabitas? Vere in altissimo et secretissimo bonitatis tuæ latet fons, unde manat fluvius misericordiæ tuæ. Nam cum totus et summe iustus sis, tamen idcirco etiam malis benignus es, quia totus summe bonus es. Minus namque bonus esses, si nulli malo esses benignus. Melior est enim qui et bonis et malis bonus est, quam qui bonis tantum est bonus. Et melior est qui malis et puniendo et parcendo est bonus, quam qui puniendo tantum. Ideo ergo misericors es, quia totus et summe bonus es. Et cum forsitan videatur, cur bonis bona et malis mala retribuas, illud certe penitus est mirandum, cur tu totus iustus et nullo egens malis et reis tuis bona tribuas. O altitudo bonitatis tuæ, deus! et videtur unde sis misericors, et non pervidetur. Cernitur unde flumen manat, et non perspicitur fons unde nascatur. Nam et de plenitudine bonitatis est quia peccatoribus tuis pius es, et in altitudine bonitatis latet qua ratione hoc es. Etenim licet bonis bona et malis mala ex bonitate retribuas, ratio tamen iustitiæ hoc postulare videtur. Cum vero malis bona tribuis: et scitur quia summe bonus hoc facere voluit, et mirum est cur summe iustus hoc velle potuit.

O misericordia, de quam opulenta dulcedine et dulci opulentia nobis profluis! O immensitas bonitatis dei, quo affectu amanda es peccatoribus! Iustos enim salvas iustitia comitante, istos vero liberas iustitia damnante. Illos meritis adiuvantibus, istos meritis repugnantibus. Illos bona quæ dedisti cognoscendo, istos mala quæ odisti ignoscendo. O immensa bonitas, quæ sic omnem intellectum excedis, veniat

How then, O good God, good to the good and to the wicked, how do You save the wicked if this is not just and You do not do anything which is not just? Or, since Your goodness is beyond comprehension, is this hidden in the inaccessible light in which You dwell? Truly in the deepest and most secret place of Your goodness is hidden the source whence the stream of Your mercy flows. For though You are all-just and supremely just You are, however—precisely because You are all-just and supremely just—also beneficent even to the wicked. You would, in fact, be less good if You were not beneficent to any wicked man. For he who is good to both good and wicked is better than he who is good only to the good. And he who is good to the wicked by both punishing and sparing them is better than he who is good to the wicked only by punishing them. You are merciful, then, because You are all-good and supremely good. And though perhaps it is apparent why You should reward the good with good and the bad with bad, what is indeed to be wondered at is why You, the all-just One who wants for nothing, should bestow good things on Your wicked and guilty creatures.

O God, how profound is Your goodness! It is apparent whence Your mercy comes, and yet it is not clearly seen. Whence the stream flows is obvious, and yet the source where it rises is not seen directly. For on the one hand it is from plenitude of goodness that You are gentle with those who sin against You; and on the other hand the reason why You are thus is hidden in the depths of Your goodness. For although from Your goodness You reward the good with good and the bad with bad, yet it seems that the very definition of justice demands this. But when You give good things to the wicked, one both understands that the supreme Good has willed to do this and one wonders why the supremely just One could have willed it.

O mercy, from what abundant sweetness and sweet abundance do you flow forth for us! O boundless goodness of God, with what feeling should You be loved by sinners! For You save the just whom justice commends, but You free sinners whom justice condemns. The former [are saved] by the aid of their merits; the latter despite their merits. The former [are saved] by regarding the good things You have given; the latter by disregarding the bad things which You hate. O boundless goodness which so surpasses all understanding, let that mercy

super me misericordia illa, quæ de tanta opulencia tui procedit! Influat in me, quæ profluit de te! Parce per clementiam, ne ulciscaris per iustitiam! Nam etsi difficile sit intelligere, quomodo misericordia tua non absit a tua iustitia, necessarium tamen est credere, quia nequaquam adversatur iustitiæ quod exundat ex bonitate, quæ nulla est sine iustitia, immo vere concordat iustitiæ. Nempe si misericors es quia es summe bonus, et summe bonus non es nisi quia es summe iustus: vere idcirco es misericors, quia summe iustus es. Adiuva me, iuste et misericors deus, cuius lucem quæro, adiuva me, ut intelligam quod dico. Vere ergo ideo misericors es, quia iustus.

Ergone misericordia tua nascitur ex iustitia tua? Ergone parcis malis ex iustitia? Si sic est, domine, si sic est, doce me quomodo est. An quia iustum est te sic esse bonum, ut nequeas intelligi melior, et sic potenter operari, ut non possis cogitari potentius? Quid enim hoc iustius? Hoc utique non fieret, si esses bonus tantum retribuendo et non parcendo, et si faceres de non bonis tantum bonos, et non etiam de malis. Hoc itaque modo iustum est ut parcas malis, et ut facias bonos de malis. Denique quod non iuste fit, non debet fieri; et quod non debet fieri, iniuste fit. Si ergo non iuste malis misereris, non debes misereri: et si non debes misereri, iniuste misereris. Quod si nefas est dicere, fas est credere te iuste misereri malis.

## CAPITULUM X

### *Quomodo iuste puniat et iuste parcat malis*

SED et iustum est, ut malos punias. Quid namque iustius, quam ut boni bona et mali mala recipiant? Quomodo ergo et iustum est ut malos punias, et iustum est ut malis parcas?

come upon me which proceeds from Your so great abundance! Let that which flows forth from You flow into me! Forbear through mercy lest You be avenged through justice! For even if it be difficult to understand how Your mercy is not apart from Your justice, it is, however, necessary to believe that it is not in any way opposed to justice, for it derives from goodness which is naught apart from justice, which indeed really coincides with justice. Truly, if You are merciful because You are supremely good, and if You are supremely good only in so far as You are supremely just, truly then You are merciful precisely because You are supremely just. Help me, just and merciful God, whose light I seek, help me so that I may understand what I am saying. Truly, then, you are merciful because You are just.

Is Your mercy not then derived from Your justice? Do You not then spare the wicked because of justice? If it is so, Lord, if it so, teach me how it is so. Is it because it is just that You are so good that You cannot be conceived to be better, and that You act with so much power that You cannot be thought to be more powerful? For what is more just than this? This, however, would not be the case if You were good only by way of retribution and not by way of forgiveness, and if You made to be good only those not yet good, and not also the wicked. In this way, then, it is just that You spare the wicked and make good men from bad. Finally, what is done unjustly ought not to be done; and what ought not to be done is done unjustly. If, then, it is unjust that You should have mercy on the wicked, You ought not to be merciful; and if You ought not to be merciful it is unjust of You to be merciful. But if it is improper to say this, then it is proper to believe that it is just of You to have mercy on the wicked.

## CHAPTER X

### *How He justly punishes and justly spares the wicked*

BUT it is also just that You punish the wicked. For what is more just than that the good should receive good things and the bad receive bad things? How then is it just both that You punish the wicked and that You spare the wicked?



An alio modo iuste punis malos, et alio modo iuste parcis malis? Cum enim punis malos, iustum est, quia illorum meritis convenit; cum vero parcis malis, iustum est, non quia illorum meritis, sed quia bonitati tuæ condecens est. Nam parcendo malis ita iustus es secundum te et non secundum nos, sicut misericors es secundum nos et non secundum te. Quoniam salvando nos quos iuste perderes, sicut misericors es non quia tu sentias affectum, sed quia nos sentimus effectum: ita iustus es non quia nobis reddas debitum, sed quia facis quod decet te summe bonum. Sic itaque sine repugnantia iuste punis et iuste parcis.

## CAPITULUM XI

*Quomodo 'universæ viæ domini misericordia et veritas', et tamen 'iustus dominus in omnibus viis suis'*

SED numquid etiam non est iustum secundum te, domine, ut malos punias? Iustum quippe est te sic esse iustum, ut iustior nequeas cogitari. Quod nequaquam esses, si tantum bonis bona, et non malis mala redderes. Iustior enim est qui et bonis et malis, quam qui bonis tantum merita retribuit. Iustum igitur est secundum te, iuste et benigne deus, et cum punis et cum parcis. Vere igitur 'universæ viæ domini misericordia et veritas', et tamen 'iustus dominus in omnibus viis suis'. Et utique sine repugnantia; quia quos vis punire, non est iustum salvari, et quibus vis parcere, non est iustum damnari. Nam id solum iustum est quod vis, et non iustum quod non vis. Sic ergo nascitur de iustitia tua misericordia tua, quia iustum est te sic esse bonum, ut et parcendo sis bonus. Et hoc est forsitan, cur summe iustus potest velle bona malis. Sed si utcumque capi potest, cur malos potes velle salvare: illud certe nulla ratione comprehendi potest, cur de similibus malis hos magis salves

Or do You with justice in one way punish the wicked and with justice in another way spare the wicked? For when You punish the wicked it is just, since it agrees with their merits; however, when You spare the wicked it is just, not because of their merits but because it is befitting to Your goodness. For in sparing the wicked You are just in relation to Yourself and not in relation to us, even as You are merciful in relation to us and not in relation to Yourself. Thus it is, as You are merciful (in saving us whom You might with justice lose) not because You experience any feeling, but because we experience the effect of Your mercy, so You are just not because You give us our due, but because You do what befits You as the supreme good. Thus, then, without inconsistency justly do You punish and justly do You pardon.

## CHAPTER XI

*How 'all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth', and yet how 'the Lord is just in all His ways'*

BUT is it not also just in relation to Yourself, Lord, that You should punish the wicked? It is just inasmuch as You are so just that You cannot be thought to be more just. But You would in no wise be so if You only returned good to the good and did not return bad to the bad. For he is more just who rewards the merits of both good and bad than he who rewards the merits of the good alone. Therefore it is just in relation to You, O just and benevolent God, both when You punish and when You pardon. Truly, then, 'all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth' [Ps. xxiv. 10] and yet 'the Lord is just in all His ways' [Ps. cxliv. 17]. And [this is so] without any inconsistency at all, since it is not just for those to be saved whom You will to punish, and it is not just for those to be damned whom You will to pardon. For that alone is just which You will, and that is not just which You do not will. Thus, then, Your mercy is derived from Your justice since it is just that You are so good that You are good even in forgiving. And perhaps this is why one who is supremely just can will good for the wicked. But if it can in some way be grasped why You can will to save the wicked, it certainly cannot be understood by any reason why from those who are alike in wickedness You save some rather

quam illos per summam bonitatem, et illos magis damnes quam istos per summam iustitiam.

Sic ergo vere es sensibilis, omnipotens, misericors et impassibilis, quemadmodum vivens, sapiens, bonus, beatus, æternus, et quidquid melius est esse quam non esse.

#### CAPITULUM XII

*Quod deus sit ipsa vita qua vivit, et sic de similibus*

SED certe quidquid es, non per aliud es quam per teipsum. Tu es igitur ipsa vita qua vivis, et sapientia qua sapis, et bonitas ipsa qua bonis et malis bonus es; et ita de similibus.

#### CAPITULUM XIII

*Quomodo solus sit incircumscriptus et æternus, cum alii spiritus sint incircumscripti et æterni*

SED omne quod clauditur aliquatenus loco aut tempore, minus est quam quod nulla lex loci aut temporis coercet. Quoniam ergo maius te nihil est, nullus locus aut tempus te cohibet, sed ubique et semper es. Quod quia de te solo dici potest, tu solus incircumscriptus es et æternus. Quomodo igitur dicuntur et alii spiritus incircumscripti et æterni?

Et quidem solus es æternus, quia solus omnium sicut non desinis, sic non incipis esse. Sed solus quomodo es incircumscriptus? An creatus spiritus ad te collatus est circumscriptus, ad corpus vero incircumscriptus? Nempe omnino circumscriptum est, quod cum alicubi totum est, non potest simul esse alibi; quod de solis corporeis cernitur. Incircumscriptum vero, quod simul est ubique totum; quod de te solo intelligitur. Circumscriptum autem simul et incircumscriptum est, quod cum alicubi sit totum, potest simul esse totum alibi, non tamen ubique; quod de creatis spiritibus cognoscitur. Si enim non esset anima tota in singulis membris sui corporis, non sentiret

than others through Your supreme goodness, and damn some rather than others through Your supreme justice.

Thus, then, truly are You perceptive, omnipotent, merciful, and impassible, just as You are living, wise, good, blessed, eternal, and whatever it is better to be rather than not to be.

## CHAPTER XII

*That God is the very life by which He lives and that the same holds for like attributes*

BUT clearly, whatever You are, You are not that through another but through Your very self. You are therefore the very life by which You live, the wisdom by which You are wise, the very goodness by which You are good to both good men and wicked, and the same holds for like attributes.

## CHAPTER XIII

*How He alone is limitless and eternal, although other spirits are also limitless and eternal*

ALL that which is enclosed in any way by place or time is less than that which no law of place or time constrains. Since, then, nothing is greater than You, no place or time confines You but You exist everywhere and always. And because this can be said of You alone, You alone are unlimited and eternal. How then are other spirits also said to be unlimited and eternal?

Now, You alone are said to be eternal because, alone of all beings, You will not cease to exist just as You have not begun to exist. But how are You alone unlimited? Is it that compared with You the created spirit is limited, but unlimited with respect to a body? Certainly that is absolutely limited which, when it is wholly in one place, cannot at the same time be somewhere else. This is seen in the case of bodies alone. But that is unlimited which is wholly everywhere at once; and this is true only of You alone. That, however, is limited and unlimited at the same time which, while wholly in one place, can at the same time be wholly somewhere else but not everywhere; and this is true of created spirits. For if the soul were not wholly in each of the parts of its body it would not sense wholly in each of them.

tota in singulis. Tu ergo, domine, singulariter es incircumscriptus et æternus, et tamen et alii spiritus sunt incircumscripti et æterni.

## CAPITULUM XIV

*Quomodo et cur videtur et non videtur deus a quærentibus eum*

AN invenisti, anima mea, quod quærebas? Quærebas deum, et invenisti eum esse quiddam summum omnium, quo nihil melius cogitari potest; et hoc esse ipsam vitam, lucem, sapientiam, bonitatem, æternam beatitudinem et beatam æternitatem; et hoc esse ubique et semper. Nam si non invenisti deum tuum: quomodo est ille hoc quod invenisti, et quod illum tam certa veritate et vera certitudine intellexisti? Si vero invenisti: quid est, quod non sentis quod invenisti? Cur non te sentit, domine deus, anima mea, si invenit te?

An non invenit, quem invenit esse lucem et veritatem? Quomodo namque intellexit hoc, nisi videndo lucem et veritatem? Aut potuit omnino aliquid intelligere de te, nisi per 'lucem tuam et veritatem tuam'? Si ergo vidit lucem et veritatem, vidit te. Si non vidit te, non vidit lucem nec veritatem. An et veritas et lux est quod vidit, et tamen nondum te vidit, quia vidit te aliquatenus, sed non vidit te sicuti es?

Domine deus meus, formator et reformator meus, dic desideranti animæ meæ, quid aliud es, quam quod vidit, ut pure videat, quod desiderat. Intendit se ut plus videat, et nihil videt ultra hoc quod vidit nisi tenebras; immo non videt tenebras, quæ nullæ sunt in te, sed videt se non plus posse videre propter tenebras suas. Cur hoc, domine, cur hoc? Tenebratur oculus eius infirmitate sua, aut reverberatur fulgore tuo? Sed certe et tenebratur in se, et reverberatur a te. Utique et obscuratur sua brevitate, et obruitur tua immensitate. Vere et contrahitur angustia sua, et vincitur amplitudine tua. Quanta namque est lux illa, de qua micat omne verum quod rationali menti lucet!

You then, O Lord, are unlimited and eternal in a unique way and yet other spirits are also unlimited and eternal.

## CHAPTER XIV

*How and why God is both seen and not seen by those <sup>seeing</sup> seeking Him*

HAVE you found, O my soul, what you were seeking? You were seeking God, and you found Him to be something which is the highest of all, than which a better cannot be thought, and to be life itself, light, wisdom, goodness, eternal blessedness and blessed eternity, and to exist everywhere and always. If you have not found your God, how is He this which you have found, and which you have understood with such certain truth and true certitude? But if you have found [Him], why is it that you do not experience what you have found? Why, O Lord God, does my soul not experience You if it has found You?

Or has it not found that which it has found to be the light and the truth? But then, how did it understand this save by seeing the light and the truth? Could it understand anything at all about You save through 'Your light and Your truth' [Ps. xlii. 3]? If, then, it saw the light and the truth, it saw You. If it did not see You then it did not see the light or the truth. Or is it that it saw both the truth and the light, and yet it did not see You because it saw You only partially but did not see You as You are?

Lord my God, You who have formed and reformed me, tell my desiring soul what You are besides what it has seen so that it may see clearly that which it desires. It strives so that it may see more, and it sees nothing beyond what it has seen save darkness. Or rather it does not see darkness, which is not in You in any way; but it sees that it cannot see more because of its own darkness. Why is this, Lord, why is this? Is its eye darkened by its weakness, or is it dazzled by Your splendour? In truth it is both darkened in itself and dazzled by You. It is indeed both darkened by its own littleness and overwhelmed by Your immensity. It is, in fact, both restricted by its own limitedness and overcome by Your fullness. For how great is that light from which shines every truth that gives light to the

Quam ampla est illa veritas, in qua est omne quod verum est, et extra quam non nisi nihil et falsum est! Quam immensa est, quæ uno intuitu videt quæcumque facta sunt, et a quo et per quem et quomodo de nihilo facta sunt! Quid puritatis, quid simplicitatis, quid certitudinis et splendoris ibi est! Certe plus quam a creatura valeat intelligi.

## CAPITULUM XV

*Quod maior sit quam cogitari possit*

ERGO domine, non solum es quo maius cogitari nequit, sed es quiddam maius quam cogitari possit. Quoniam namque valet cogitari esse aliquid huiusmodi: si tu non es hoc ipsum, potest cogitari aliquid maius te; quod fieri nequit.

## CAPITULUM XVI

*Quod hæc sit 'lux inaccessibilis, quam inhabitat'*

VERE, domine, hæc est lux inaccessibilis, in qua habitas. Vere enim non est aliud quod hanc penetret, ut ibi te pervideat. Vere ideo hanc non video, quia nimia mihi est; et tamen quiddam video, per illam video, sicut infirmus oculus quod videt per lucem solis videt, quam in ipso sole nequit aspicere. Non potest intellectus meus ad illam. Nimis fulget, non capit illam, nec suffert oculus animæ meæ diu intendere in illam. Reverberatur fulgore, vincitur amplitudine, obruitur immensitate, confunditur capacitate. O summa et inaccessibilis lux, o tota et beata veritas, quam longe es a me, qui tam prope tibi sum! Quam remota es a conspectu meo, qui sic præsens sum conspectui tuo! Ubique es tota præsens, et non te video. In te moveor et in te sum, et ad te non possum accedere. Intra me et circa me es, et non te sentio.

understanding! How complete is that truth in which is everything that is true and outside of which nothing exists save nothingness and falsity! How boundless is that which in one glance sees everything that has been made, and by whom and through whom and in what manner it was made from nothing! What purity, what simplicity, what certitude and splendour is there! Truly it is more than can be understood by any creature.

## CHAPTER XV

*How He is greater than can be thought*

THEREFORE, Lord, not only are You that than which a greater cannot be thought, but You are also something greater than can be thought. For since it is possible to think that there is such a one, then, if You are not this same being something greater than You could be thought—which cannot be.

## CHAPTER XVI

- *Seeing*

*That this is the 'inaccessible light' in which He 'dwells'*

TRULY, Lord, this is the inaccessible light in which You dwell. For truly there is nothing else which can penetrate through it so that it might discover You there. Truly I do not see this light since it is too much for me; and yet whatever I see I see through it, just as an eye that is weak sees what it sees by the light of the sun which it cannot look at in the sun itself. My understanding is not able [to attain] to that [light]. It shines too much and [my understanding] does not grasp it nor does the eye of my soul allow itself to be turned towards it for too long. It is dazzled by its splendour, overcome by its fullness, overwhelmed by its immensity, confused by its extent. O supreme and inaccessible light; O whole and blessed truth, how far You are from me who am so close to You! How distant You are from my sight while I am so present to Your sight! You are wholly present everywhere and I do not see You. In You I move and in You I have my being and I cannot come near to You. You are within me and around me and I do not have any experience of You.



## CAPITULUM XVII

*Quod in deo sit harmonia, odor, sapor, lenitas, pulchritudo, suo ineffabili modo*

ADHUC lates, domine, animam meam in luce et beatitudine tua, et idcirco versatur illa adhuc in tenebris et miseria sua. Circumspicit enim, et non videt pulchritudinem tuam. Auscultat, et non audit harmoniam tuam. Olfacit, et non percipit odorem tuum. Gustat, et non cognoscit saporem tuum. Palpat, et non sentit lenitatem tuam. Habes enim hæc, domine deus, in te tuo ineffabili modo, qui ea dedisti rebus a te creatis suo sensibili modo; sed obriguerunt, sed obstupuerunt, sed obstructi sunt sensus animæ meæ vetusto languore peccati.

## CAPITULUM XVIII

*Quod in deo nec in æternitate eius, quæ ipse est, nullæ sint partes*

ET iterum ecce turbatio, ecce iterum obviat mæror et luctus quærenti gaudium et lætitiā! Sperabat iam anima mea satietatem, et ecce iterum obruitur egestate! Affectabam iam comedere, et ecce magis <inchoo> esurire! Conabar assurgere ad lucem dei, et recidi in tenebras meas. Immo non modo cecidi in eas, sed sentio me involutum in eis. Ante cecidi, quam conciperet 'me mater mea'. Certe in illis 'conceptus sum', et cum earum obvolutione natus sum. Olim certe in illo omnes cecidimus, 'in quo omnes' peccavimus. In illo omnes perdidimus, qui facile tenebat et male sibi et nobis perdidit, quod cum volumus quærere nescimus, cum quærimus non invenimus, cum invenimus non est quod quærimus. Adiuva me tu 'propter bonitatem tuam, domine'. 'Quæsivi vultum tuum, vultum tuum, domine, requiram; ne avertas faciem tuam a me'. Releva me de me ad te. Munda, sana, acue, 'illumina' oculum

## CHAPTER XVII

*That harmony, fragrance, sweetness, softness, and beauty are in God according to His own ineffable manner*

STILL You hide away, Lord, from my soul in Your light and blessedness, and so it still dwells in its darkness and misery. For it looks all about, and does not see Your beauty. It listens, and does not hear Your harmony. It smells, and does not sense Your fragrance. It tastes, and does not recognize Your savour. It feels, and does not sense Your softness. For You have in Yourself, Lord, in Your own ineffable manner, those [qualities] You have given to the things created by You according to their own sensible manner. But the senses of my soul, because of the ancient weakness of sin, have become hardened and dulled and obstructed.

## CHAPTER XVIII

*That there are no parts in God or in His eternity which He is*

BEHOLD, once more confusion, once more sorrow and grief stand in my way as I seek joy and happiness! Even now my soul hoped for fulfilment, and, lo, once again it is overwhelmed by neediness! Even now I sought to have my fill, and, lo, I hunger the more! I strove to ascend to God's light and I have fallen back into my own darkness. Indeed, not only have I fallen back into it, but I feel myself enclosed within it. I fell before 'my mother conceived me' [Ps. i. 7]. In that darkness indeed 'I was conceived' [ibid.] and I was born under its shadow. We all, in fact, at one time fell in him 'in whom all of us' sinned [Rom. v. 12]. In him (who easily possessed and wickedly lost it for himself and for us), we all lost that which, when we wish to look for it, we do not know; that which, when we look for it, we do not find; that which, when we find it, is not what we are looking for. Help me 'because of Your goodness, Lord' [Ps. xxiv. 7]. 'I sought Your countenance, Your countenance I will seek, O Lord; do not turn Your face away from me' [Ps. xxvi. 8]. Raise me up from my own self to You. Purify, heal, make sharp, 'illumine' the eye of my soul so that it may see You [Ps. xii. 4]. Let my soul gather its strength

mentis meæ, ut intueatur te. Recolligat vires suas anima mea, et toto intellectu iterum intendat in te, domine.

Quid es, domine, quid es, quid te intelliget cor meum? Certe vita es, sapientia es, veritas es, bonitas es, beatitudo es, æternitas es, et omne verum bonum es. Multa sunt hæc, non potest angustus intellectus meus tot uno simul intuitu videre, ut omnibus simul delectetur. Quomodo ergo, domine, es omnia hæc? An sunt partes tui, aut potius unumquodque horum est totum quod es? Nam quidquid partibus est iunctum, non est omnino unum, sed quodam modo plura et diversum a seipso, et vel actu vel intellectu dissolvi potest; quæ aliena sunt a te quo nihil melius cogitari potest. Nullæ igitur partes sunt in te, domine, nec es plura, sed sic es unum quiddam et idem tibi ipsi, ut in nullo tibi ipsi sis dissimilis; immo tu es ipsa unitas, nullo intellectu divisibilis. Ergo vita et sapientia et reliqua non sunt partes tui, sed omnia sunt unum, et unumquodque horum est totum quod es, et quod sunt reliqua omnia. Quoniam ergo nec tu habes partes nec tua æternitas quæ tu es: nusquam et numquam est pars tua aut æternitatis tuæ, sed ubique totus es, et æternitas tua tota est semper.

#### CAPITULUM XIX

*Quod non sit in loco aut tempore, sed omnia sint in illo*

SED si per æternitatem tuam fuisti et es et eris, et fuisse non est futurum esse, et esse non est fuisse vel futurum esse: quomodo æternitas tua tota est semper?

An de æternitate tua nihil præterit ut iam non sit, nec aliquid futurum est quasi nondum sit? Non ergo fuisti heri aut eris cras, sed heri et hodie et cras es. Immo nec heri nec hodie nec cras es, sed simpliciter es extra omne tempus. Nam nihil aliud est heri et hodie et cras quam in tempore; tu autem, licet nihil sit sine te,

again and with all its understanding strive once more towards You, Lord.

What are You, Lord, what are You; what shall my heart understand You to be? You are, assuredly, life, You are wisdom, You are truth, You are goodness, You are blessedness, You are eternity, and You are every true good. These are many things, and my limited understanding cannot see them all in one single glance so as to delight in all at once. How then, Lord, are You all these things? Are they parts of You, or rather, is each one of these wholly what You are? For whatever is made up of parts is not absolutely one, but in a sense many and other than itself, and it can be broken up either actually or by the mind—all of which things are foreign to You, than whom nothing better can be thought. Therefore there are no parts in You, Lord; neither are You many, but You are so much one and the same with Yourself that in nothing are You dissimilar with Yourself. Indeed You are unity itself not divisible by any mind. Life and wisdom and the other [attributes], then, are not parts of You, but all are one and each one of them is wholly what You are and what all the others are. Since, then, neither You nor Your eternity which You are have parts, no part of You or of Your eternity is anywhere or at any time, but You exist as a whole everywhere and Your eternity exists as a whole always.

#### CHAPTER XIX

*That He is not in place or time but all things are in Him*

BUT if through Your eternity You have been and are and will be, and if to have been is not to be in the future, and to be present is not to have been or to be in the future—how does Your eternity exist as a whole always?

Or is there nothing past in Your eternity, so that it is now no longer; nor anything future, as though it were not already? You were not, therefore, yesterday, nor will You be tomorrow, but yesterday and today and tomorrow You *are*. Indeed You exist neither yesterday nor today nor tomorrow but are absolutely outside all time. For yesterday and today and tomorrow are completely in time; however, You, though nothing

non es tamen in loco aut tempore, sed omnia sunt in te. Nihil enim te continet, sed tu contines omnia.

## CAPITULUM XX

*Quod sit ante et ultra omnia etiam æterna*

TU ergo imples et complecteris omnia, tu es ante et ultra omnia. Et quidem ante omnia es, quia antequam fierent tu es. Ultra omnia vero quomodo es? Qualiter enim es ultra ea quæ finem non habebunt?

AN quia illa sine te nullatenus esse possunt, tu autem nullo modo minus es, etiam si illa redeunt in nihilum? Sic enim quodam modo es ultra illa. An etiam quia illa cogitari possunt habere finem, tu vero nequaquam? Nam sic illa quidem habent finem quodam modo, tu vero nullo modo. Et certe quod nullo modo habet finem, ultra illud est quod aliquo modo finitur. An hoc quoque modo transis omnia etiam æterna, quia tua et illorum æternitas tota tibi præsens est, cum illa nondum habeant de sua æternitate quod venturum est, sicut iam non habent quod præteritum est? Sic quippe semper es ultra illa, cum semper ibi sis præsens, seu cum illud semper sit tibi præsens, ad quod illa nondum pervenerunt.

## CAPITULUM XXI

*An hoc sit 'sæculum sæculi' sive 'sæcula sæculorum'*

AN ergo hoc est 'sæculum sæculi' sive 'sæcula sæculorum'? Sicut enim sæculum temporum continet omnia temporalia, sic tua æternitas continet etiam ipsa sæcula temporum. Quæ sæculum quidem est propter indivisibilem unitatem, sæcula vero propter interminabilem immensitatem. Et quamvis ita sis magnus, domine, ut omnia sint te plena et sint in te: sic tamen es sine omni spatio, ut nec medium nec dimidium nec ulla pars sit in te.

can be without You, are nevertheless not in place or time but all things are in You. For nothing contains You, but You contain all things.

## CHAPTER XX

*That He is before and beyond even all eternal things*

You therefore permeate and embrace all things; You are before and beyond all things. You are before all things of course since, before they came to be, You already *are*. But how are You beyond all things? For in what way are You beyond those things that will never have an end?

Is it because these things can in no way exist without You, though You do not exist any the less even if they return to nothingness? For in this way, in a sense, You are beyond them. Or is it also that they can be thought to have an end while You cannot in any way? For in this way, in a sense, they do indeed have an end, but You do not in any sense. And assuredly that which does not have an end in any way at all is beyond that which does come to an end in some way. Is it also in this way that You surpass even all eternal things, since Your eternity and theirs is wholly present to You, though they do not have the part of their eternity which is yet to come just as they do not now have what is past? In this way, indeed, are You always beyond those things, because You are always present at that point (or because it is always present to You) which they have not yet reached.

## CHAPTER XXI

*Whether this is the 'age of the age' or the 'ages of the ages'*

Is this, then, the 'age of the age' or the 'ages of the ages'? For just as an age of time contains all temporal things, so Your eternity contains also the very ages of time. Indeed this [eternity] is an 'age' because of its indivisible unity, but 'ages' because of its immensity without limit. And although You are so great, Lord, that all things are filled with You and are in You, yet You exist without any spatial extension so that there is neither a middle nor half nor any part in You.

## CAPITULUM XXII

*Quod solus sit, quod est et qui est*

Tu solus ergo, domine, es quod es, et tu es qui es. Nam quod aliud est in toto et aliud in partibus, et in quo aliquid est mutabile, non omnino est quod est. Et quod incepit a non esse et potest cogitari non esse, et nisi per aliud subsistat redit in non esse; et quod habet fuisse quod iam non est, et futurum esse quod nondum est: id non est proprie et absolute. Tu vero es quod es, quia quidquid aliquando aut aliquo modo es, hoc totus et semper es.

Et tu es qui proprie et simpliciter es, quia nec habes fuisse aut futurum esse, sed tantum præsens esse, nec potes cogitari aliquando non esse. Et vita es et lux et sapientia et beatitudo et æternitas et multa huiusmodi bona, et tamen non es nisi unum et summum bonum, tu tibi omnino sufficiens, nullo indigens, quo omnia indigent ut sint, et ut bene sint.

## CAPITULUM XXIII

*Quod hoc bonum sit pariter pater et filius et spiritus sanctus; et hoc sit unum necessarium, quod est omne et totum et solum bonum*

Hoc bonum es tu, deus pater; hoc est verbum tuum, id est filius tuus. Etenim non potest aliud quam quod es, aut aliquid maius vel minus te esse in verbo quo te ipsum dicis; quoniam verbum tuum sic est verum quomodo tu verax, et idcirco est ipsa veritas sicut tu, non alia quam tu; et sic es tu simplex, ut de te non possit nasci aliud quam quod tu es. Hoc ipsum est amor unus et communis tibi et filio tuo, id est sanctus spiritus ab utroque procedens. Nam idem amor non est impar tibi aut filio tuo; quia tantum amas te et illum, et ille te et seipsum,

## CHAPTER XXII

*That He alone is what He is and who He is*

You alone then, Lord, are what You are and You are who You are. For what is one thing as a whole and another as to its parts, and has in it something mutable, is not altogether what it is. And what began [to exist] from non-existence, and can be thought not to exist, and returns to non-existence unless it subsists through some other; and what has had a past existence but does not now exist, and a future existence but does not yet exist—such a thing does not exist in a strict and absolute sense. But You are what You are, for whatever You are at any time or in any way this You are wholly and forever.

And You are the being who exists in a strict and absolute sense because You have neither past nor future existence but only present existence; nor can You be thought not to exist at any time. And You are life and light and wisdom and blessedness and eternity and many suchlike good things; and yet You are nothing save the one and supreme good, You who are completely sufficient unto Yourself, needing nothing, but rather He whom all things need in order that they may have being and well-being.

## CHAPTER XXIII

*That this good is equally Father and Son and Holy Spirit; and that this is the one necessary being which is altogether and wholly and solely good*

You are this good, O God the Father; this is Your Word, that is to say, Your Son. For there cannot be any other than what You are, or any thing greater or lesser than You, in the Word by which You utter Yourself. For Your Word is as true as You are truthful and is therefore the very truth that You are and that is not other than You. And You are so simple that there cannot be born of You any other than what You are. This itself is the Love, one and common to You and to Your Son, that is the Holy Spirit proceeding from both. For this same Love is not unequal to You or to Your Son since Your love for Yourself and Him, and His love for You and Himself, are as great as You



quantus es tu et ille; nec est aliud a te et ab illo quod dispar non est tibi et illi; nec de summa simplicitate potest procedere aliud quam quod est de quo procedit. Quod autem est singulus quisque, hoc est tota trinitas simul, pater et filius et spiritus sanctus; quoniam singulus quisque non est aliud quam summe simplex unitas et summe una simplicitas, quæ nec multiplicari nec aliud et aliud esse potest.

‘Porro unum est necessarium.’ Porro hoc est illud unum necessarium, in quo est omne bonum, immo quod est omne et unum et totum et solum bonum.

## CAPITULUM XXIV

*Coniectatio, quale et quantum sit hoc bonum*

EXCITA nunc, anima mea, et erige totum intellectum tuum, et cogita quantum potes, quale et quantum sit illud bonum. Si enim singula bona delectabilia sunt, cogita intente quam delectabile sit illud bonum, quod continet iucunditatem omnium bonorum; et non qualem in rebus creatis sumus experti, sed tanto differentem quanto differt creator a creatura. Si enim bona est vita creata: quam bona est vita creatrix? Si iucunda est salus facta: quam iucunda est salus quæ facit omnem salutem? Si amabilis est sapientia in cognitione rerum conditarum: quam amabilis est sapientia quæ omnia condidit ex nihilo? Denique si multæ et magnæ delectationes sunt in rebus delectabilibus: qualis et quanta delectatio est in illo qui fecit ipsa delectabilia?

## CAPITULUM XXV

*Quæ et quanta bona sint fruentibus eo*

O QUI hoc bono fruetur: quid illi erit, et quid illi non erit! Certe quidquid volet erit, et quod nolet non erit. Ibi quippe erunt bona corporis et animæ, qualia ‘nec oculus vidit nec

and He are. Nor is that other than You and than Him which is not different from You and Him; nor can there proceed from Your supreme simplicity what is other than that from which it proceeds. Thus, whatever each is singly, that the whole Trinity is altogether, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; since each singly is not other than the supremely simple unity and the supremely unified simplicity which can be neither multiplied nor differentiated.

'Moreover, one thing is necessary' [Luke x. 42]. This is, moreover, that one thing necessary in which is every good, or rather, which is wholly and uniquely and completely and solely good.

#### CHAPTER XXIV

*A speculation as to what kind and how great this good is*

Now, my soul, rouse and lift up your whole understanding and think as much as you can on what kind and how great this good is. For if particular goods are enjoyable, consider carefully how enjoyable is that good which contains the joyfulness of all goods; not [a joy] such as we have experienced in created things, but as different from this as the Creator differs from the creature. For if life that is created is good, how good is the Life that creates? If the salvation that has been brought about is joyful, how joyful is the Salvation that brings about all salvation? If wisdom in the knowledge of things that have been brought into being is lovable, how lovable is the Wisdom that has brought all things into being out of nothing? Finally, if there are many great delights in delightful things, of what kind and how great is the delight in Him who made these same delightful things?

#### CHAPTER XXV

*Which goods belong to those who enjoy this good, and how great they are*

OH he who will enjoy this good, what will be his and what will not be his! Whatever he wishes will certainly be his and whatever he does not wish will not be his. In fact, all the goods of body and soul will be there such that 'neither eye has seen, nor

auris audivit nec cor hominis' cogitavit. Cur ergo per multa vagaris, homuncio, quærendo bona animæ tuæ et corporis tui? Ama unum bonum, in quo sunt omnia bona, et sufficit. Desidera simplex bonum, quod est omne bonum, et satis est. Quid enim amas, caro mea, quid desideras, anima mea? Ibi est, ibi est quidquid amatis, quidquid desideratis.

Si delectat pulchritudo: 'fulgebunt iusti sicut sol'. Si velocitas aut fortitudo, aut libertas corporis cui nihil obsistere possit: 'erunt similes angelis dei', quia 'seminatur corpus animale, et surget corpus spirituale', potestate utique non natura. Si longa et salubris vita: ibi est sana æternitas et æterna sanitas, quia 'iusti in perpetuum vivent' et 'salus iustorum a domino'. Si satietas: satiabuntur 'cum apparuerit gloria' dei. Si ebrietas: 'inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus' dei. Si melodia: ibi angelorum chori concinunt sine fine deo. Si quælibet non immunda sed munda voluptas: 'torrente voluptatis suæ potabit eos' deus. Si sapientia: ipsa dei sapientia ostendet eis seipsam. Si amicitia: diligent deum plus quam seipsos, et invicem tamquam seipsos, et deus illos plus quam illi seipsos; quia illi illum et se et invicem per illum, et ille se et illos per seipsum. Si concordia: omnibus illis erit una voluntas, quia nulla illis erit nisi sola dei voluntas. Si potestas: omnipotentes erunt suæ voluntatis ut deus suæ. Nam sicut poterit deus quod volet per seipsum, ita poterunt illi quod volent per illum; quia sicut illi non aliud volent quam quod ille, ita ille volet quidquid illi volent; et quod ille volet non poterit non esse. Si honor et divitiæ: deus suos servos bonos et fideles supra multa constituet, immo 'filii dei' et dii 'vocabuntur' et erunt; et ubi erit filius eius, ibi erunt et illi, 'heredes quidem dei, coheredes autem Christi'. Si

ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived' [I Cor. ii. 9]. Why, then, do you wander about so much, O insignificant man, seeking the goods of your soul and body? Love the one good in which all good things are, and that is sufficient. Desire the simple good which contains every good, and that is enough. For what do you love, O my flesh, what do you desire, O my soul? There it is, there it is, whatever you love, whatever you desire. If beauty delights you, 'the just will shine as the sun' [Matt. xiii. 43]. If the swiftness or strength or freedom of the body that nothing can withstand [delights you], 'they will be like the angels of God' [Matt. xxii. 30]; for it is 'sown as a natural body and shall rise as a spiritual body' [I Cor. xv. 44] by a supernatural power. If it is a long and healthy life, a healthy eternity and an eternal health is there since 'the just will live forever' [Wis. v. 16] and 'the salvation of the just is from the Lord' [Ps. xxxvi. 39]. If it is satisfaction, they will be satisfied 'when the glory of God will appear' [Ps. xvi. 15]. If it is quenching of thirst, 'they will be inebriated with the abundance of the house of God' [Ps. xxxv. 9]. If it is melody, there the choirs of angels play unceasingly to God. If it is pleasure of any kind, not impure but pure, God 'will make them drink from the torrent of His pleasure' [Ps. xxxv. 9]. If it is wisdom, the very wisdom of God will show itself to them. If it is friendship, they will love God more than themselves and one another as themselves, and God will love them more than they love themselves because it is through Him that they love Him and themselves and one another, and He loves Himself and them through Himself. If it is peace, for all of them there will be one will, since they will have none save the will of God. If it is power, they will be all-powerful with regard to their wills, as God is with His. For just as God will be able to do what He wills through Himself, so through Him they will be able to do what they will; because, just as they will not will anything save what He wills, so He will will whatever they will, and what He intends to will cannot not be. If it is honours and riches, God will set His good and faithful servants over many things [Matt. xxv. 21, 23]; indeed, they will be called 'sons of God' and 'Gods' [Matt. v. 9] and will in fact be so; and where the Son will be there also they will be, 'heirs indeed of God and co-heirs of Christ' [Rom. viii. 17]. If it is real security, they will indeed be

vera securitas: certe ita certi erunt numquam et nullatenus ista vel potius istud bonum sibi defuturum, sicut certi erunt se non sua sponte illud amissuros, nec dilectorem deum illud dilectoribus suis invitis ablaturum, nec aliquid deo potentius invitos deum et illos separaturum.

Gaudium vero quale aut quantum est, ubi tale ac tantum bonum est? Cor humanum, cor indigens, cor expertum ærumnas immo obrutum ærumnis: quantum gauderes, si his omnibus abundares? Interroga intima tua, si capere possint gaudium suum de tanta beatitudine sua. Sed certe si quis alius, quem omnino sicut teipsum diligeres, eandem beatitudinem haberet, duplicaretur gaudium tuum, quia non minus gauderes pro eo quam pro teipso. Si vero duo vel tres vel multo plures idipsum haberent, tantundem pro singulis quantum pro teipso gauderes, si singulos sicut teipsum amares. Ergo in illa perfecta caritate innumerabilium beatorum angelorum et hominum, ubi nullus minus diligit alium quam seipsum, non aliter gaudebit quisque pro singulis aliis quam pro seipso. Si ergo cor hominis de tanto suo bono vix capiet gaudium suum: quomodo capax erit tot et tantorum gaudiorum? Et utique quoniam quantum quisque diligit aliquem, tantum de bono eius gaudet: sicut in illa perfecta felicitate unusquisque plus amabit sine comparatione deum quam se et omnes alios secum, ita plus gaudebit absque existimatione de felicitate dei quam de sua et omnium aliorum secum. Sed si deum sic diligent toto corde, tota mente, tota anima, ut tamen totum cor, tota mens, tota anima non sufficiat dignitati dilectionis: profecto sic gaudebunt toto corde, tota mente, tota anima, ut totum cor, tota mens, tota anima non sufficiat plenitudini gaudii.

as assured that this same [security], or rather this same good, will never in any way fail them, as they will be assured that they will not lose it of their own accord, nor that the loving God will take it away against their will from those who love Him, nor that anything more powerful than God will separate God and them against their will.

What joy there is indeed and how great it is where there exists so great a good! O human heart, O needy heart, O heart experienced in suffering, indeed overwhelmed by suffering, how greatly would you rejoice if you abounded in all these things! Ask your heart whether it could comprehend its joy in its so great blessedness? But surely if someone else whom you loved in every respect as yourself possessed that same blessedness, your joy would be doubled for you would rejoice as much for him as for yourself. If, then, two or three or many more possessed it you would rejoice just as much for each one as for yourself, if you loved each one as yourself. Therefore in that perfect and pure love of the countless holy angels and holy men where no one will love another less than himself, each will rejoice for every other as for himself. If, then, the heart of man will scarcely be able to comprehend the joy that will belong to it from so great a good, how will it comprehend so many and such great joys? Indeed, to the degree that each one loves some other, so he will rejoice in the good of that other; therefore, just as each one in that perfect happiness will love God incomparably more than himself and all others with him, so he will rejoice immeasurably more over the happiness of God than over his own happiness and that of all the others with him. But if they love God with their whole heart, their whole mind, their whole soul, while yet their whole heart, their whole mind, their whole soul, is not equal to the grandeur of this love, they will assuredly so rejoice with their whole heart, their whole mind, and their whole soul, that their whole heart, their whole mind, their whole soul will not be equal to the fullness of their joy.

## CAPITULUM XXVI

*An hoc sit 'gaudium plenum', quod promittit dominus*

DEUS meus et dominus meus, spes mea et gaudium cordis mei, dic animæ meæ, si hoc est gaudium de quo nobis dicis per filium tuum: 'petite et accipietis, ut gaudium vestrum sit plenum'. Inveni namque gaudium quoddam plenum, et plus quam plenum. Pleno quippe corde, plena mente, plena anima, pleno toto homine gaudio illo: adhuc supra modum supererit gaudium. Non ergo totum illud gaudium intrabit in gaudentes, sed toti gaudentes intrabunt in gaudium. Dic, domine, dic servo tuo intus in corde suo, si hoc est gaudium, in quod intrabunt servi tui, qui intrabunt 'in gaudium domini' sui. Sed gaudium illud certe quo gaudebunt electi tui, 'nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit'. Nondum ergo dixi aut cogitavi, domine, quantum gaudebunt illi beati tui. Utique tantum gaudebunt, quantum amabunt; tantum amabunt, quantum cognoscent. Quantum te cognoscent, domine, tunc, et quantum te amabunt? Certe 'nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit' in hac vita, quantum te cognoscent et amabunt in illa vita.

Oro, deus, cognoscam te, amem te, ut gaudeam de te. Et si non possum in hac vita ad plenum, vel proficiam in dies usque dum veniat illud ad plenum. Proficiat hic in me notitia tui, et ibi fiat plena; crescat amor tuus, et ibi sit plenus: ut hic gaudium meum sit in spe magnum, et ibi sit in re plenum. Domine, per filium tuum iubes immo consulis petere et promittis accipere, 'ut gaudium' nostrum 'plenum sit'. Peto, domine, quod consulis per admirabilem consiliarium nostrum; accipiam quod promittis per veritatem tuam, 'ut gaudium' meum 'plenum sit'. Deus verax, peto accipiam, 'ut gaudium' meum 'plenum sit'. Meditetur interim inde mens mea, loquatur

## CHAPTER XXVI

*Whether this is the 'fullness of joy' which the Lord promises?*

MY God and my Lord, my hope and the joy of my heart, tell my soul if this is the joy of which You speak through Your Son: 'Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete' [John xvi. 24]. For I have discovered a joy that is complete and more than complete. Indeed, when the heart is filled with that joy, the mind is filled with it, the soul is filled with it, the whole man is filled with it, yet joy beyond measure will remain. The whole of that joy, then, will not enter into those who rejoice, but those who rejoice will enter wholly into that joy. Speak, Lord, tell Your servant within his heart if this is the joy into which Your servants will enter who enter 'into the joy of the Lord' [Matt. xxv. 21]. But surely that joy in which Your chosen ones will rejoice is that which 'neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man' [1 Cor. ii. 9]. I have not yet said or thought, then, Lord, how greatly your blessed will rejoice. They will, no doubt, rejoice as much as they love, and they will love as much as they know. How much will they know You, then, Lord, and how much will they love You? In very truth, 'neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man' [ibid.] in this life how much they will know You and love You in that life.

I pray, O God, that I may know You and love You, so that I may rejoice in You. And if I cannot do so fully in this life may I progress gradually until it comes to fullness. Let the knowledge of You grow in me here, and there [in heaven] be made complete; let Your love grow in me here and there be made complete, so that here my joy may be great in hope, and there be complete in reality. Lord, by Your Son You command, or rather, counsel us to ask and you promise that we shall receive so that our 'joy may be complete' [John xvi. 24]. I ask, Lord, as You counsel through our admirable counsellor. May I receive what You promise through Your truth so that my 'joy may be complete' [ibid.]. God of truth, I ask that I may receive so that my 'joy may be complete' [ibid.]. Until then let my mind meditate on it, let my tongue speak of it, let my heart love



inde lingua mea. Amet illud cor meum, sermocinetur os meum.  
Esuriat illud anima mea, sitiatur caro mea, desideret tota  
substantia mea, donec intrem 'in gaudium domini' mei, 'qui  
est' trinus et unus deus 'benedictus in sæcula. Amen'.

it, let my mouth preach it. Let my soul hunger for it, let my flesh thirst for it, my whole being desire it, until I enter into the 'joy of the Lord' [Matt. xxv. 21], who is God, Three in One, 'blessed forever. Amen' [1 Rom. i. 25].

## QUID AD HAEC RESPONDEAT QUIDAM PRO INSIPIENTE

[1.] DUBITANTI utrum sit vel neganti quod sit aliqua talis natura, qua nihil maius cogitari possit, cum esse illam hinc dicitur primo probari, quod ipse negans vel ambigens de illa iam habeat eam in intellectu, cum audiens illam dici id quod dicitur intelligit; deinde quia quod intelligit, necesse est ut non in solo intellectu sed etiam in re sit, et hoc ita probatur quia maius est esse et in re quam in solo intellectu, et si illud in solo est intellectu, maius illo erit quidquid etiam in re fuerit, ac sic maius omnibus minus erit aliquo et non erit maius omnibus, quod utique repugnat; et ideo necesse est ut maius omnibus, quod esse iam probatum est in intellectu, non in solo intellectu sed et in re sit, quoniam aliter maius omnibus esse non poterit: respondere forsitan potest:

[2.] Quod hoc iam esse dicitur in intellectu meo, non ob aliud nisi quia id quod dicitur intelligo: nonne et quaecumque falsa ac nullo prorsus modo in seipsis existentia in intellectu habere similiter dici possem, cum ea dicente aliquo, quaecumque ille diceret, ego intelligerem? Nisi forte tale illud constat esse ut non eo modo quo etiam falsa quaeque vel dubia, haberi possit in cogitatione, et ideo non dicor illud auditum cogitare vel in cogitatione habere, sed intelligere et in intellectu habere; quia scilicet non possim hoc aliter cogitare, nisi intelligendo id est scientia comprehendendo re ipsa illud existere. Sed si hoc

A REPLY TO THE FOREGOING BY A  
CERTAIN WRITER ON BEHALF OF THE  
FOOL

[By GAUNILO]

[1.] To one doubting whether there is, or denying that there is, something of such a nature than which nothing greater can be thought, it is said here [in the *Proslogion*] that its existence is proved, first because the very one who denies or doubts it already has it in his mind, since when he hears it spoken of he understands what is said; and further, because what he understands is necessarily such that it exists not only in the mind but also in reality. And this is proved by the fact that it is greater to exist both in the mind and in reality than in the mind alone. For if this same being exists in the mind alone, anything that existed also in reality would be greater than this being, and thus that which is greater than everything would be less than some thing and would not be greater than everything, which is obviously contradictory. Therefore, it is necessarily the case that that which is greater than everything, being already proved to exist in the mind, should exist not only in the mind but also in reality, since otherwise it would not be greater than everything.

[2.] But he [the Fool] can perhaps reply that this thing is said already to exist in the mind only in the sense that I understand what is said. For could I not say that all kinds of unreal things, not existing in themselves in any way at all, are equally in the mind since if anyone speaks about them I understand whatever he says? Unless perhaps it is manifest that this being is such that it can be entertained in the mind in a different way from unreal or doubtfully real things, so that I am not said to think of or have in thought what is heard, but to understand and have it in mind, in that I cannot really think of this being in any other way save by understanding it, that is to say, by grasping by certain knowledge that the thing itself actually exists. But if this is the case, first, there will be no difference between having an object in mind (taken as preceding in time), and understanding that the object actually exists (taken as following

est, primo quidem non hic erit iam aliud idemque tempore praecedens habere rem in intellectu, et aliud idque tempore sequens intelligere rem esse; ut fit de pictura quae prius est in animo pictoris, deinde in opere. Deinde vix umquam poterit esse credibile, cum dictum et auditum fuerit istud, non eo modo posse cogitari non esse, quo etiam potest non esse deus. Nam si non potest: cur contra negantem aut dubitantem quod sit aliqua talis natura, tota ista disputatio est assumpta? Postremo quod tale sit illud ut non possit nisi mox cogitatum indubitabilis existentiae suae certo percipi intellectu, indubio aliquo probandum mihi est argumento, non autem isto quod iam sit hoc in intellectu meo cum auditum intelligo, in quo similiter esse posse quaecumque alia incerta vel etiam falsa ab aliquo cuius verba intelligerem dicta adhuc puto; et insuper magis, si illa deceptus ut saepe fit crederem, qui istud nondum credo.

[3.] Unde nec illud exemplum de pictore picturam quam facturus est iam in intellectu habente, satis potest huic argumento congruere. Illa enim pictura antequam fiat in ipsa pictoris arte habetur, et tale quippiam in arte artificis alicuius nihil est aliud quam pars quaedam intelligentiae ipsius; quia et sicut sanctus AUGUSTINUS ait: 'cum faber arcam facturus in opere, prius habet illam in arte; arca quae fit in opere non est vita, arca quae est in arte vita est, quia vivit anima artificis, in qua sunt ista omnia, antequam proferantur'. Ut quid enim in vivente artificis anima vita sunt ista, nisi quia nil sunt aliud quam scientia vel intelligentia animae ipsius? At vero quidquid extra illa, quae ad ipsam mentis noscuntur pertinere naturam aut auditum aut excogitatum intellectu percipitur verum: aliud sine dubio est verum illud, aliud intellectus ipse quo capitur. Quocirca etiam si verum sit esse aliquid quo maius quicquam nequeat cogitari: non tamen hoc auditum et intellectum tale est qualis nondum facta pictura in intellectu pictoris.

in time), as in the case of the picture which exists first in the mind of the painter and then in the completed work. And thus it would be scarcely conceivable that, when this object had been spoken of and heard, it could not be thought not to exist in the same way in which God can [be thought] not to exist. For if He cannot, why put forward this whole argument against anyone denying or doubting that there is something of this kind? Finally, that it is such a thing that, as soon as it is thought of, it cannot but be certainly perceived by the mind as indubitably existing, must be proved to me by some indisputable argument and not by that proposed, namely, that it must already be in my mind when I understand what I hear. For this is in my view like [arguing that] any things doubtfully real or even unreal are capable of existing if these things are mentioned by someone whose spoken words I might understand, and, even more, that [they exist] if, though deceived about them as often happens, I should believe them [to exist]—which argument I still do not believe!

[3.] Hence, the example of the painter having the picture he is about to make already in his mind cannot support this argument. For this picture, before it is actually made, is contained in the very art of the painter and such a thing in the art of any artist is nothing but a certain part of his very understanding, since as St. Augustine says [*In Iohannem*, tract. 1, n. 16], 'when the artisan is about actually to make a box he has it beforehand in his art. The box which is actually made is not a living thing, but the box which is in his art is a living thing since the soul of the artist, in which these things exist before their actual realization, is a living thing'. Now how are these things living in the living soul of the artist unless they are identical with the knowledge or understanding of the soul itself? But, apart from those things which are known to belong to the very nature of the mind itself, in the case of any truth perceived by the mind by being either heard or understood, then it cannot be doubted that this truth is one thing and that the understanding which grasps it is another. Therefore even if it were true that there was something than which nothing greater could be thought, this thing, heard and understood, would not, however, be the same as the not-yet-made picture is in the mind of the painter.

[4.] Huc accedit illud, quod praetaxatum est superius, quia scilicet illud omnibus quae cogitari possint maius, quod nihil aliud posse esse dicitur quam ipse deus, tam ego secundum rem vel ex specie mihi vel ex genere notam, cogitare auditum vel in intellectu habere non possum, quam nec ipsum deum, quem utique ob hoc ipsum etiam non esse cogitare possum. Neque enim aut rem ipsam novi aut ex alia possum conicere simili, quandoquidem et tu talem asseris illam, ut esse non possit simile quicquam. Nam si de homine aliquo mihi prorsus ignoto, quem etiam esse nescirem, dici tamen aliquid audirem: per illam specialem generalemve notitiam qua quid sit homo vel homines novi, de illo quoque secundum rem ipsam quae est homo cogitare possem. Et tamen fieri posset, ut mentiente illo qui diceret, ipse quem cogitarem homo non esset; cum tamen ego de illo secundum veram nihilominus rem, non quae esset ille homo, sed quae est homo quilibet, cogitarem. Nec sic igitur, ut haberem falsum istud in cogitatione vel in intellectu, habere possum illud cum audio dici 'deus' aut 'aliquid omnibus maius', cum quando illud secundum rem veram mihi quoque notam cogitare possem, istud omnino nequeam nisi tantum secundum vocem, secundum quam solam aut vix aut numquam potest ullum cogitari verum; siquidem cum ita cogitatur, non tam vox ipsa quae res est utique vera, hoc est litterarum sonus vel syllabarum, quam vocis auditae significatio cogitetur; sed non ita ut ab illo qui novit, quid ea soleat voce significari, a quo scilicet cogitatur secundum rem vel in sola cogitatione veram, verum ut ab eo qui illud non novit et solummodo cogitat secundum animi motum illius auditu vocis effectum significationemque perceptae vocis conantem effingere sibi. Quod mirum est, si umquam rei veritate potuerit. Ita ergo nec prorsus aliter adhuc in intellectu meo constat illud haberi, cum audio intelligoque dicentem esse aliquid maius omnibus quae

[4.] 'To this we may add something that has already been mentioned, namely, that upon hearing it spoken of I can so little think of or entertain in my mind this being (that which is greater than all those others that are able to be thought of, and which it is said can be none other than God Himself) in terms of an object known to me either by species or genus, as I can think of God Himself, whom indeed for this very reason I can even think does not exist. For neither do I know the reality itself, nor can I form an idea from some other things like it since, as you say yourself, it is such that nothing could be like it. For if I heard something said about a man who was completely unknown to me so that I did not even know whether he existed, I could nevertheless think about him in his very reality as a man by means of that specific or generic notion by which I know what a man is or men are. However, it could happen that, because of a falsehood on the part of the speaker, the man I thought of did not actually exist, although I thought of him nevertheless as a truly existing object—not this particular man but any man in general. It is not, then, in the way that I have this unreal thing in thought or in mind that I can have that object in my mind when I hear 'God' or 'something greater than everything' spoken of. For while I was able to think of the former in terms of a truly existing thing which was known to me, I know nothing at all of the latter save for the verbal formula, and on the basis of this alone one can scarcely or never think of any truth. For when one thinks in this way, one thinks not so much of the word itself, which is indeed a real thing (that is to say, the sound of the letters or syllables), as of the meaning of the word which is heard. However, it [that which is greater than everything] is not thought of in the way of one who knows what is meant by that expression—thought of, that is, in terms of the thing [signified] or as true in thought alone. It is rather in the way of one who does not really know this object but thinks of it in terms of an affection of his mind produced by hearing the spoken words, and who tries to imagine what the words he has heard might mean. However, it would be astonishing if he could ever [attain to] the truth of the thing. Therefore, when I hear and understand someone saying that there is something greater than everything that can be thought of, it is agreed that it is in this latter sense



valeant cogitari. Haec de eo, quod summa illa natura iam esse dicitur in intellectu meo.

[5.] Quod autem et in re necessario esse inde mihi probatur, quia nisi fuerit, quidquid est in re maius illa erit, ac per hoc non erit illud maius omnibus, quod utique iam esse probatum est in intellectu: ad hoc respondeo: Si esse dicendum est in intellectu, quod secundum veritatem cuiusquam rei nequit saltem cogitari: et hoc in meo sic esse non denego. Sed quia per hoc esse quoque in re non potest ullatenus obtinere: illud ei esse adhuc penitus non concedo, quousque mihi argumento probetur indubio. Quod qui esse dicit hoc quod maius omnibus aliter non erit omnibus maius: non satis attendit cui loquatur. Ego enim nondum dico, immo etiam nego vel dubito ulla re vera esse maius illud, nec aliud ei esse concedo quam illud, si dicendum est 'esse', cum secundum vocem tantum auditam rem prorsus ignotam sibi conatur animus effingere. Quomodo igitur inde mihi probatur maius illud rei veritate subsistere, quia constet illud maius omnibus esse, cum id ego eo usque negem adhuc dubitemve constare, ut ne in intellectu quidem vel cogitatione mea eo saltem modo maius ipsum esse dicam, quo dubia etiam multa sunt et incerta? Prius enim certum mihi necesse est fiat re vera esse alicubi maius ipsum, et tum demum ex eo quod maius est omnibus, in seipso quoque subsistere non erit ambiguum.

[6.] Exempli gratia: Aiunt quidam alicubi oceani esse insulam, quam ex difficultate vel potius impossibilitate inveniendi quod non est, cognominant aliqui 'perditam', quamque fabulantur multo amplius quam de fortunatis insulis fertur, divitiarum deliciarumque omnium inaestimabili ubertate pollere, nulloque possessore aut habitatore universis aliis

that it is in my mind and not in any other sense. So much for the claim that that supreme nature exists already in my mind.

[5.] That, however, [this nature] necessarily exists in reality is demonstrated to me from the fact that, unless it existed, whatever exists in reality would be greater than it and consequently it would not be that which is greater than everything that undoubtedly had already been proved to exist in the mind. To this I reply as follows: if something that cannot even be thought in the true and real sense must be said to exist in the mind, then I do not deny that this also exists in my mind in the same way. But since from this one cannot in any way conclude that it exists also in reality, I certainly do not yet concede that it actually exists, until this is proved to me by an indubitable argument. For he who claims that it actually exists because otherwise it would not be that which is greater than everything does not consider carefully enough whom he is addressing. For I certainly do not yet admit this greater [than everything] to be any truly existing thing; indeed I doubt or even deny it. And I do not concede that it exists in a different way from that—if one ought to speak of ‘existence’ here—when the mind tries to imagine a completely unknown thing on the basis of the spoken words alone. How then can it be proved to me on that basis that that which is greater than everything truly exists in reality (because it is evident that it is greater than all others) if I keep on denying and also doubting that this is evident and do not admit that this greater [than everything] is either in my mind or thought, not even in the sense in which many ‘doubtfully real and unreal things are? It must first of all be proved to me then that this same greater than everything truly exists in reality somewhere, and then only will the fact that it is greater than everything make it clear that it also subsists in itself.

[6.] For example: they say that there is in the ocean somewhere an island which, because of the difficulty (or rather the impossibility) of finding that which does not exist, some have called the ‘Lost Island’. And the story goes that it is blessed with all manner of priceless riches and delights in abundance, much more even than the Happy Isles, and, having no owner or inhabitant, it is superior everywhere in abundance of riches to all those other lands that men inhabit. Now, if anyone tell

quas incolunt homines terris possidendorum redundantia usquequaque praestare. Hoc ita esse dicat mihi quispiam, et ego facile dictum in quo nihil est difficultatis intelligam. At si tunc velut consequenter adiungat ac dicat: non potes ultra dubitare insulam illam terris omnibus praestantiorē vere esse alicubi in re, quam et in intellectu tuo non ambigis esse; et quia praestantius est, non in intellectu solo sed etiam esse in re; ideo sic eam necesse est esse, quia nisi fuerit, quaecumque alia in re est terra, praestantior illa erit, ac sic ipsa iam a te praestantior intellecta praestantior non erit;—si inquam per haec ille mihi velit astruere de insula illa quod vere sit ambigendum ultra non esse: aut iocari illum credam, aut nescio quem stultiorē debeam reputare, utrum me si ei concedam, an illum si se putet aliqua certitudine insulae illius essentiam astruxisse, nisi prius ipsam praestantiam eius solummodo sicut rem vere atque indubie existentem nec ullatenus sicut falsum aut incertum aliquid in intellectu meo esse docuerit.

[7.] Haec interim ad obiecta insipiens ille responderit. Cui cum deinceps asseritur tale esse maius illud, ut nec sola cogitatione valeat non esse, et hoc rursus non aliunde probatur, quam eo ipso quod aliter non erit omnibus maius: idem ipsum possit referre responsum et dicere: Quando enim ego rei veritate esse tale aliquid, hoc est ‘maius omnibus’, dixi, ut ex hoc mihi debeat probari in tantum etiam re ipsa id esse, ut nec possit cogitari non esse? Quapropter certissimo primitus aliquo probandum est argumento aliquam superiorem, hoc est maiorem ac meliorem omnium quae sunt esse naturam, ut ex hoc alia iam possimus omnia comprobare, quibus necesse est illud quod maius ac melius est omnibus non carere. Cum autem dicitur quod summa res ista non esse nequeat cogitari: melius fortasse diceretur, quod non esse aut etiam posse non esse non possit intelligi. Nam secundum proprietatem verbi istius falsa nequeunt intelligi, quae possunt utique eo modo cogitari, quo

me that it is like this, I shall easily understand what is said, since nothing is difficult about it. But if he should then go on to say, as though it were a logical consequence of this: You cannot any more doubt that this island that is more excellent than all other lands truly exists somewhere in reality than you can doubt that it is in your mind; and since it is more excellent to exist not only in the mind alone but also in reality, therefore it must needs be that it exists. For if it did not exist, any other land existing in reality would be more excellent than it, and so this island, already conceived by you to be more excellent than others, will not be more excellent. If, I say, someone wishes thus to persuade me that this island really exists beyond all doubt, I should either think that he was joking, or I should find it hard to decide which of us I ought to judge the bigger fool—I, if I agreed with him, or he, if he thought that he had proved the existence of this island with any certainty, unless he had first convinced me that its very excellence exists in my mind precisely as a thing existing truly and indubitably and not just as something unreal or doubtfully real.

[7.] Thus first of all might the Fool reply to objections. And if then someone should assert that this greater [than everything] is such that it cannot be thought not to exist (again without any other proof than that otherwise it would not be greater than everything), then he could make this same reply and say: When have I said that there truly existed some being that is 'greater than everything', such that from this it could be proved to me that this same being really existed to such a degree that it could not be thought not to exist? That is why it must first be conclusively proved by argument that there is some higher nature, namely that which is greater and better than all the things that are, so that from this we can also infer everything else which necessarily cannot be wanting to what is greater and better than everything. When, however, it is said that this supreme being cannot be *thought* not to exist, it would perhaps be better to say that it cannot be *understood* not to exist nor even to be able not to exist. For, strictly speaking, unreal things cannot be *understood*, though certainly they can be *thought* of in the same way as the Fool *thought* that God does not exist. I know with

deum non esse insipiens cogitavit. Et me quoque esse certissime scio, sed et posse non esse nihilominus scio. Summum vero illud quod est, scilicet deus, et esse et non esse non posse indubitanter intelligo. Cogitare autem me non esse quamdiu esse certissime scio, nescio utrum possim. Sed si possum: cur non et quidquid aliud eadem certitudine scio? Si autem non possum: non erit iam istud proprium deo.

[8.] Cetera libelli illius tam veraciter et tam praeclare sunt magnificeque disserta, tanta denique referta utilitate et pii ac sancti affectus intimo quodam odore fragrantia, ut nullo modo propter illa quae in initiis recte quidem sensa, sed minus firmiter argumentata sunt, ista sint contemnenda; sed illa potius argumentanda robustius, ac sic omnia cum ingenti veneratione et laude suscipienda.

complete certainty that I exist, but I also know at the same time nevertheless that I can not-exist. And I *understand* without any doubt that that which exists to the highest degree, namely God, both exists and cannot not exist. I do not know, however, whether I can *think* of myself as not existing while I know with absolute certainty that I do exist; but if I can, why cannot [I do the same] with regard to anything else I know with the same certainty? If however I cannot, this will not be the distinguishing characteristic of God [namely, to be such that He cannot be thought not to exist].

[8.] The other parts of this tract are argued so truly, so brilliantly and so splendidly, and are also of so much worth and instinct with so fragrant a perfume of devout and holy feeling, that in no way should they be rejected because of those things at the beginning (rightly intuited, but less surely argued out). Rather the latter should be demonstrated more firmly and so everything received with very great respect and praise.

## QUID AD HAEC RESPONDEAT EDITOR IPSIUS LIBELLI

QUONIAM non me reprehendit in his dictis ille 'insipiens' contra quem sum locutus in meo opusculo, sed quidam non insipiens et catholicus pro insipiente: sufficere mihi potest respondere catholico.

[I.] Dicis quidem quicumque es qui dicis hæc posse dicere insipientem: quia non est in intellectu aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit, aliter quam quod secundum veritatem cuiusquam rei nequit saltem cogitari, et quia non magis consequitur hoc quod dico 'quo maius cogitari non possit' ex eo quia est in intellectu esse et in re, quam perditam insulam certissime existere ex eo quia cum describitur verbis, audiens eam non ambigit in intellectu suo esse. Ego vero dico: Si 'quo maius cogitari non potest' non intelligitur vel cogitatur nec est in intellectu vel cogitatione: profecto deus aut non est quo maius cogitari non possit, aut non intelligitur vel cogitatur et non est in intellectu vel cogitatione. Quod quam falsum sit, fide et conscientia tua pro firmissimo utor argumento. Ergo 'quo maius cogitari non potest' vere intelligitur et cogitatur et est in intellectu et cogitatione. Quare aut vera non sunt quibus contrariis probare, aut ex eis non consequitur quod te consequenter opinaris concludere.

Quod autem putas ex eo quia intelligitur aliquid quo maius cogitari nequit, non consequi illud esse in intellectu, nec si est in intellectu ideo esse in re: certe ego dico: si vel cogitari potest esse, necesse est illud esse. Nam 'quo maius cogitari nequit' non potest cogitari esse nisi sine initio. Quidquid

*A REPLY TO THE FOREGOING BY  
THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK  
IN QUESTION*

SINCE it is not the Fool, against whom I spoke in my tract, who takes me up, but one who, though speaking on the Fool's behalf, is an orthodox Christian and no fool, it will suffice if I reply to the Christian.

[I.] You say then—you, whoever you are, who claim that the Fool can say these things—that the being *than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought* is not in the mind except as what cannot be thought of, in the true sense, at all. And [you claim], moreover, that what I say does not follow, namely, that '*that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought*' exists in reality from the fact that it exists in the mind, any more than that the Lost Island most certainly exists from the fact that, when it is described in words, he who hears it described has no doubt that it exists in his mind. I reply as follows: If '*that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought*' is neither understood nor thought of, and is neither in the mind nor in thought, then it is evident that *either* God is not *that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought* *or* is not understood nor thought of, and is not in the mind nor in thought. Now my strongest argument that this is false is to appeal to your faith and to your conscience. Therefore '*that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought*' is truly understood and thought and is in the mind and in thought. For this reason, [the arguments] by which you attempt to prove the contrary are either not true, or what you believe follows from them does not in fact follow.

Moreover, you maintain that, from the fact that *that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought* is understood, it does not follow that it is in the mind, nor that, if it is in the mind, it therefore exists in reality. I insist, however, that simply if it can be thought it is necessary that it exists. For '*that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought*' cannot be thought save as being without a beginning. But whatever can be thought as existing



autem potest cogitari esse et non est, per initium potest cogitari esse. Non ergo 'quo maius cogitari nequit' cogitari potest esse et non est. Si ergo cogitari potest esse, ex necessitate est.

Amplius. Si utique vel cogitari potest, necesse est illud esse. Nullus enim negans aut dubitans esse aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit, negat vel dubitat quia si esset, nec actu nec intellectu posset non esse. Aliter namque non esset quo maius cogitari non posset. Sed quidquid cogitari potest et non est: si esset, posset vel actu vel intellectu non esse. Quare si vel cogitari potest, non potest non esse 'quo maius cogitari nequit'. Sed ponamus non esse, si vel cogitari valet. At quidquid cogitari potest et non est: si esset, non esset 'quo maius cogitari non possit'. Si ergo esset 'quo maius cogitari non possit', non esset quo maius cogitari non possit; quod nimis est absurdum. Falsum est igitur non esse aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit, si vel cogitari potest. Multo itaque magis, si intelligi et in intellectu esse potest.

Plus aliquid dicam. Procul dubio quidquid alicubi aut aliquando non est: etiam si est alicubi aut aliquando, potest tamen cogitari numquam et nusquam esse, sicut non est alicubi aut aliquando. Nam quod heri non fuit et hodie est: sicut heri non fuisse intelligitur, ita numquam esse subintelligi potest. Et quod hic non est et alibi est: sicut non est hic, ita potest cogitari nusquam esse. Similiter cuius partes singulæ non sunt, ubi aut quando sunt aliæ partes, eius omnes partes et ideo ipsum totum possunt cogitari numquam aut nusquam esse. Nam et si dicatur tempus semper esse et mundus ubique, non tamen illud totum semper aut iste totus est ubique. Et sicut

and does not actually exist can be thought as having a beginning of its existence. Consequently, 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' cannot be thought as existing and yet not actually exist. If, therefore, it can be thought as existing, it exists of necessity.

Further: even if it can be thought of, then certainly it necessarily exists. For no one who denies or doubts that there is something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, denies or doubts that, if this being were to exist, it would not be capable of not-existing either actually or in the mind—otherwise it would not be that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. But, whatever can be thought as existing and does not actually exist, could, if it were to exist, possibly not exist either actually or in the mind. For this reason, if it can merely be thought, 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' cannot not exist. However, let us suppose that it does not exist even though it can be thought. Now, whatever can be thought and does not actually exist would not be, if it should exist, 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. If, therefore, it were 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' it would not be that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, which is completely absurd. It is, then, false that something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought does not exist if it can merely be thought; and it is all the more false if it can be understood and be in the mind.

I will go further: It cannot be doubted that whatever does not exist in any one place or at any one time, even though it does exist in some place or at some time, can however be thought to exist at no place and at no time, just as it does not exist in some place or at some time. For what did not exist yesterday and today exists can thus, as it is understood not to have existed yesterday, be supposed not to exist at any time. And that which does not exist here in this place, and does exist elsewhere can, in the same way as it does not exist here, be thought not to exist anywhere. Similarly with a thing some of whose particular parts do not exist in the place and at the time its other parts exist—all of its parts, and therefore the whole thing itself, can be thought to exist at no time and in no place. For even if it be said that time always exists and that the world is everywhere, the former does not, however, always exist as a whole, nor is

singulæ partes temporis non sunt quando aliæ sunt, ita possunt numquam esse cogitari. Et singulæ mundi partes, sicut non sunt, ubi aliæ sunt, ita subintelligi possunt nusquam esse. Sed et quod partibus coniunctum est, cogitatione dissolvi et non esse potest. Quare quidquid alicubi aut aliquando totum non est: etiam si est, potest cogitari non esse. At, 'quo maius nequit cogitari': si est, non potest cogitari non esse. Alioquin si est, non est quo maius cogitari non possit; quod non convenit. Nullatenus ergo alicubi aut aliquando totum non est, sed semper et ubique totum est.

Putasne aliquatenus posse cogitari vel intelligi aut esse in cogitatione vel intellectu, de quo hæc intelliguntur? Si enim non potest, non de eo possunt hæc intelligi. Quod si dicis non intelligi et non esse in intellectu quod non penitus intelligitur: dic quia qui non potest intueri purissimam lucem solis, non videt lucem diei, quæ non est nisi lux solis. Certe vel hactenus intelligitur et est in intellectu 'quo maius cogitari nequit', ut hæc de eo intelligantur.

[II.] Dixi itaque in argumentatione quam reprehendis quia cum insipiens audit proferri 'quo maius cogitari non potest', intelligit quod audit. Utique qui non intelligit si nota lingua dicitur, aut nullum aut nimis obrutum habet intellectum.

Deinde dixi quia si intelligitur, est in intellectu. An est in nullo intellectu, quod necessario in rei veritate esse monstratum est? Sed dices quia etsi est in intellectu, non tamen consequitur quia intelligitur. Vide quia consequitur esse in intellectu, ex eo quia intelligitur. Sicut enim quod cogitatur, cogitatione cogita-

the other as a whole everywhere; and as certain particular parts of time do not exist when other parts do exist, therefore they can be even thought not to exist at any time. Again, as certain particular parts of the world do not exist in the same place where other parts do exist, they can thus be supposed not to exist anywhere. Moreover, what is made up of parts can be broken up in thought and can possibly not exist. Thus it is that whatever does not exist as a whole at a certain place and time can be thought not to exist, even if it does actually exist. But 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' cannot be thought not to exist if it does actually exist; otherwise, if it exists it is not that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, which is absurd. In no way, then, does this being not exist as a whole in any particular place or at any particular time; but it exists as a whole at every time and in every place.

Do you not consider then that that about which we understand these things can to some extent be thought or understood, or can exist in thought or in the mind? For if it cannot, we could not understand these things about it. And if you say that, because it is not completely understood, it cannot be understood at all and cannot be in the mind, then you must say [equally] that one who cannot see the purest light of the sun directly does not see daylight, which is the same thing as the light of the sun. Surely then 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' is understood and is in the mind to the extent that we understand these things about it.

[II.] I said, then, in the argument that you criticize, that when the Fool hears 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' spoken of he understands what he hears. Obviously if it is spoken of in a known language and he does not understand it, then either he has no intelligence at all, or a completely obtuse one.

Next I said that, if it is understood it is in the mind; or does what has been proved to exist necessarily in actual reality not exist in any mind? But you will say that, even if it is in the mind, yet it does not follow that it is understood. Observe then that, from the fact that it is understood, it does follow that it is in the mind. For, just as what is thought is thought by means of a thought, and what is thought by a thought is thus, as thought,

tur, et quod cogitatione cogitatur, sicut cogitatur sic est in cogitatione: ita quod intelligitur intellectu intelligitur, et quod intellectu intelligitur, sicut intelligitur ita est in intellectu. Quid hoc planius?

Postea dixi quia si est vel in solo intellectu, potest cogitari esse et in re, quod maius est. Si ergo in solo est intellectu: idipsum scilicet 'quo maius non potest cogitari', est 'quo maius cogitari potest. Rogo quid consequentius? An enim si est vel in solo intellectu, non potest cogitari esse et in re? Aut si potest, nonne qui hoc cogitat, aliquid cogitat maius eo, si est in solo intellectu? Quid igitur consequentius, quam si 'quo maius cogitari nequit' est in solo intellectu, idem esse quo maius cogitari possit? Sed utique 'quo maius cogitari potest', in nullo intellectu est 'quo maius cogitari non possit'. An ergo non consequitur 'quo maius cogitari nequit', si est in ullo intellectu, non esse in solo intellectu? Si enim est in solo intellectu, est quo maius cogitari potest; quod non convenit.

[III.] Sed tale est, inquis, ac si aliquis insulam oceani omnes terras sua fertilitate vincentem, quæ difficultate immo impossibilitate inveniendi quod non est, 'perdita' nominatur, dicat idcirco non posse dubitari vere esse in re, quia verbis descriptam facile quis intelligit. Fidens loquor, quia si quis invenerit mihi aut re ipsa aut sola cogitatione existens præter 'quo maius cogitari non possit', cui aptare valeat connexionem huius meæ argumentationis: inveniam et dabo illi perditam insulam amplius non perdendam. Palam autem iam videtur 'quo non valet cogitari maius' non posse cogitari non esse, quod tam certa ratione veritatis existit. Aliter enim nullatenus existeret. Denique si quis dicit se cogitare illud non esse, dico quia cum hoc cogitat, aut cogitat aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit, aut non cogitat. Si non cogitat, non cogitat non

*in* thought, so also, what is understood is understood by the mind, and what is understood by the mind is thus, as understood, *in* the mind. What could be more obvious than this?

I said further that if a thing exists even in the mind alone, it can be thought to exist also in reality, which is greater. If, then, it (namely, 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought') exists in the mind alone, it is something than which a greater *can* be thought. What, I ask you, could be more logical? For if it exists even in the mind alone, cannot it be thought to exist also in reality? And if it can [be so thought], is it not the case that he who thinks this thinks of something greater than it, if it exists in the mind alone? What, then, could follow more logically than that, if 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' exists in the mind alone, it is the same as that-than-which-a-greater-*can*-be-thought? But surely 'that-than-which-a-greater-*can*-be-thought' is not for any mind [the same as] 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. Does it not follow, then, that 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought', if it exists in anyone's mind, does not exist in the mind alone? For if it exists in the mind alone, it is that-than-which-a-greater-*can*-be-thought, which is absurd.

[III.] You claim, however, that this is as though someone asserted that it cannot be doubted that a certain island in the ocean (which is more fertile than all other lands and which, because of the difficulty or even the impossibility of discovering what does not exist, is called the 'Lost Island') truly exists in reality since anyone easily understands it when it is described in words. Now, I truly promise that if anyone should discover for me something existing either in reality or in the mind alone—except 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'—to which the logic of my argument would apply, then I shall find that Lost Island and give it, never more to be lost, to that person. It has already been clearly seen, however, that 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' cannot be thought not to exist, because it exists as a matter of such certain truth. Otherwise it would not exist at all. In short, if anyone says that he thinks that this being does not exist, I reply that, when he thinks of this, either he thinks of something than which a greater cannot be thought, or he does not think of it. If he does not think

esse quod non cogitat. Si vero cogitat, utique cogitat aliquid quod nec cogitari possit non esse. Si enim posset cogitari non esse, cogitari posset habere principium et finem. Sed hoc non potest. Qui ergo illud cogitat, aliquid cogitat quod nec cogitari non esse possit. Hoc vero qui cogitat, non cogitat idipsum non esse. Alioquin cogitat quod cogitari non potest. Non igitur potest cogitari non esse 'quo maius nequit cogitari'.

[IV.] Quod autem dicis, quia cum dicitur, quod summa res ista non esse nequeat cogitari, melius fortasse diceretur quod non esse aut etiam posse non esse non possit intelligi: potius dicendum fuit non posse cogitari. Si enim dixissem rem ipsam non posse intelligi non esse, fortasse tu ipse, qui dicis, quia secundum proprietatem verbi istius falsa nequeunt intelligi, obiceres nihil quod est posse intelligi non esse. Falsum est enim non esse quod est. Quare non esse proprium deo non posse intelligi non esse. Quod si aliquid eorum quæ certissime sunt potest intelligi non esse, similiter et alia certa non esse posse intelligi. Sed hoc utique non potest obici de cogitatione, si bene consideretur. Nam et si nulla quæ sunt possint intelligi non esse, omnia tamen possunt cogitari non esse, præter id quod summe est. Illa quippe omnia et sola possunt cogitari non esse, quæ initium aut finem aut partium habent coniunctionem, et sicut iam dixi, quidquid alicubi aut aliquando totum non est. Illud vero solum non potest cogitari non esse, in quo nec initium nec finem nec partium coniunctionem, et quod non nisi semper et ubique totum ulla invenit cogitatio.

Scito igitur quia potes cogitare te non esse, quamdiu esse certissime scis; quod te miror dixisse nescire. Multa namque

of it, then he does not think that what he does not think of does not exist. If, however, he does think of it, then indeed he thinks of something which cannot be even thought not to exist. For if it could be thought not to exist, it could be thought to have a beginning and an end—but this cannot be. Thus, he who thinks of it thinks of something that cannot be thought not to exist; indeed, he who thinks of this does not think of it as not existing, otherwise he would think what cannot be thought. Therefore 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' cannot be thought not to exist.

[IV.] You say, moreover, that when it is said that this supreme reality cannot be *thought* not to exist, it would perhaps be better to say that it cannot be *understood* not to exist or even to be able not to exist. However, it must rather be said that it cannot be *thought*. For if I had said that the thing in question could not be *understood* not to exist, perhaps you yourself (who claim that we cannot understand—if this word is to be taken strictly—things that are unreal) would object that nothing that exists can be understood not to exist. For it is false [to say that] what exists does not exist, so that it is not the distinguishing characteristic of God not to be able to be understood not to exist. But, if any of those things which exist with absolute certainty can be understood not to exist, in the same way other things that certainly exist can be understood not to exist. But, if the matter is carefully considered, this objection cannot be made apropos [the term] 'thought'. For even if none of those things that exist can be *understood* not to exist, all however can be *thought* as not existing, save that which exists to a supreme degree. For in fact all those things (and they alone) that have a beginning or end or are made up of parts and, as I have already said, all those things that do not exist as a whole in a particular place or at a particular time can be thought as not existing. Only that being in which there is neither beginning nor end nor conjunction of parts, and that thought does not discern save as a whole in every place and at every time, cannot be thought as not existing.

Know then that you can think of yourself as not existing while yet you are absolutely sure that you exist. I am astonished that you have said that you do not know this. For we think of



cogitamus non esse quæ scimus esse, et multa esse quæ non esse scimus; non existimando, sed fingendo ita esse ut cogitamus. Et quidem possumus cogitare aliquid non esse, quamdiu scimus esse, quia simul et illud possumus et istud scimus. Et non possumus cogitare non esse, quamdiu scimus esse, quia non possumus cogitare esse simul et non esse. Si quis igitur sic distinguat huius prolationis has duas sententias, intelliget nihil, quamdiu esse scitur, posse cogitari non esse, et quidquid est præter id quo maius cogitari nequit, etiam cum scitur esse, posse non esse cogitari. Sic igitur et proprium est deo non posse cogitari non esse, et tamen multa non possunt cogitari, quamdiu sunt, non esse. Quomodo tamen dicatur cogitari deus non esse, in ipso libello puto sufficienter esse dictum.

[V.] Qualia vero sint et alia quæ mihi obicis pro insipiente, facile est deprehendere vel parum sapienti, et ideo id ostendere supersedendum existimaveram. Sed quoniam audio quibusdam ea legentibus aliquid contra me valere videri, paucis de illis commemorabo.

Primum, quod sæpe repetis me dicere, quia quod est maius omnibus est in intellectu, si est in intellectu est et in re—aliter enim omnibus maius non esset omnibus maius—nusquam in omnibus dictis meis invenitur talis probatio. Non enim idem valet quod dicitur 'maius omnibus' et 'quo maius cogitari nequit', ad probandum quia est in re quod dicitur. Si quis enim dicat 'quo maius cogitari non possit' non esse aliquid in re aut posse non esse aut vel non esse posse cogitari, facile refelli potest. Nam quod non est, potest non esse; et quod non esse potest, cogitari potest non esse. Quidquid autem cogitari

many things that we know to exist, as not existing; and [we think of] many things that we know not to exist, as existing—not judging that it is really as we think but imagining it to be so. We *can*, in fact, think of something as not existing while knowing that it does exist, since we can [think of] the one and know the other at the same time. And we *cannot* think of something as not existing if yet we know that it does exist, since we cannot think of it as existing and not existing at the same time. He, therefore, who distinguishes these two senses of this assertion will understand that [in one sense] nothing can be thought as not existing while yet it is known to exist, and that [in another sense] whatever exists, save that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, can be thought of as not existing even when we know that it does exist. Thus it is that, on the one hand, it is the distinguishing characteristic of God that He cannot be thought of as not existing, and that, on the other hand, many things, the while they do exist, cannot be thought of as not existing. In what sense, however, one can say that God can be thought of as not existing I think I have adequately explained in my tract.

[V.] As for the other objections you make against me on behalf of the Fool, it is quite easy to meet them, even for one weak in the head, and so I considered it a waste of time to show this. But since I hear that they appear to certain readers to have some force against me, I will deal briefly with them.

First, you often reiterate that I say that that which is greater than everything exists in the mind, and that if it is in the mind, it exists also in reality, for otherwise that which is greater than everything would not be that which is greater than everything. However, nowhere in all that I have said will you find such an argument. For 'that which is greater than everything' and 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' are not equivalent for the purpose of proving the real existence of the thing spoken of. Thus, if anyone should say that 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' is not something that actually exists, or that it can possibly not exist, or even can be thought of as not existing, he can easily be refuted. For what does not exist can possibly not exist, and what can not exist can be thought of as not existing. However, whatever can be thought of

potest non esse: si est, non est quo maius cogitari non possit. Quod si non est: utique si esset, non esset quo maius non possit cogitari. Sed dici non potest quia 'quo maius non possit cogitari' si est, non est quo maius cogitari non possit; aut si esset, non esset quo non possit cogitari maius. Patet ergo quia nec non est nec potest non esse aut cogitari non esse. Aliter enim si est, non est quod dicitur; et si esset, non esset.

Hoc autem non tam facile probari posse videtur de eo quod maius dicitur omnibus. Non enim ita patet quia quod non esse cogitari potest non est maius omnibus quæ sunt, sicut quia non est quo maius cogitari non possit; nec sic est indubitabile quia, si est aliquid 'maius omnibus', non est aliud quam 'quo maius non possit cogitari', aut si esset, non esset similiter aliud, quomodo certum est de eo quod dicitur 'quo maius cogitari nequit'. Quid enim si quis dicat esse aliquid maius omnibus quæ sunt, et idipsum tamen posse cogitari non esse, et aliquid maius eo etiam si non sit, posse tamen cogitari? An hic sic aperte inferri potest: non est ergo maius omnibus quæ sunt, sicut ibi apertissime diceretur: ergo non est quo maius cogitari nequit? Illud namque alio indiget argumento quam hoc quod dicitur 'omnibus maius'; in isto vero non est opus alio quam hoc ipso quod sonat 'quo maius cogitari non possit'. Ergo si non similiter potest probari de eo quod 'maius omnibus' dicitur quod de se per seipsum probat 'quo maius nequit cogitari': iniuste me reprehendisti dixisse quod non dixi, cum tantum differat ab eo quod dixi.

Si vero vel post aliud argumentum potest, nec sic me debuisti reprehendere dixisse quod probari potest. Utrum autem possit,

as not existing, if it actually exists, is not that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. But if it does not exist, indeed even if it should exist, it would not be that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. But it cannot be asserted that 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' is not, if it exists, that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, or that, if it should exist, it would not be that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. It is evident, then, that it neither does not exist nor can not exist or be thought of as not existing. For if it does exist in another way it is not what it is said to be, and if it should exist [in another way] it would not be [what it was said to be].

However it seems that it is not as easy to prove this in respect of what is said to be greater than everything. For it is not as evident that that which can be thought of as not existing is not that which is greater than everything, as that it is not that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. And, in the same way, neither is it indubitable that, if there is something which is 'greater than everything', it is identical with 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'; nor, if there were [such a being], that no other like it might exist—as this is certain in respect of what is said to be 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. For what if someone should say that something that is greater than everything actually exists, and yet that this same being can be thought of as not existing, and that something greater than it can be thought, even if this does not exist? In this case can it be inferred as evidently that [this being] is therefore not that which is greater than everything, as it would quite evidently be said in the other case that it is therefore not that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought? The former [inference] needs, in fact, a premiss in addition to this which is said to be 'greater than everything'; but the latter needs nothing save this utterance itself, namely, 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. Therefore, if what 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' of itself proves concerning itself cannot be proved in the same way in respect of what is said to be 'greater than everything', you criticize me unjustly for having said what I did not say, since it differs so much from what I did say.

If, however, it can [be proved] by means of another argument, you should not have criticized me for having asserted what can

facile perpendit qui hoc posse 'quo maius cogitari nequit' cognoscit. Nullatenus enim potest intelligi 'quo maius cogitari non possit' nisi id quod solum omnibus est maius. Sicut ergo 'quo maius cogitari nequit' intelligitur et est in intellectu, et ideo esse in rei veritate asseritur: sic quod maius dicitur omnibus intelligi et esse in intellectu, et idcirco re ipsa esse ex necessitate concluditur. Vides ergo, quam recte me comparasti stulto illi, qui hoc solo quod descripta intelligeretur perditam insulam esse vellet asserere?

[VI.] Quod autem obicis quælibet falsa vel dubia similiter posse intelligi et esse in intellectu quemadmodum illud quod dicebam: miror quid hic sensisti contra me dubium probare volentem, cui primum hoc sat erat, ut quolibet modo illud intelligi et esse in intellectu ostenderem, quatenus consequenter consideraretur, utrum esset in solo intellectu, velut falsa, an et in re, ut vera. Nam si falsa et dubia hoc modo intelliguntur et sunt in intellectu, quia cum dicuntur audiens intelligit quid dicens significet, nihil prohibet quod dixi intelligi et esse in intellectu. Quomodo autem sibi convenient, quod dicis quia falsa dicente aliquo quæcumque ille diceret intelligeres, et quia illud quod non eo modo quo etiam falsa habetur in cogitatione, non diceris auditum cogitare aut in cogitatione habere, sed intelligere et in intellectu habere, quia scilicet non possis hoc aliter cogitare nisi intelligendo, id est scientia comprehendendo re ipsa illud existere; quomodo inquam convenient et falsa intelligi et intelligere esse scientia comprehendere existere aliquid: nil ad me, tu videris.

be proved. Whether it can [be proved], however, is easily appreciated by one who understands that it can [in respect of] 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. For one cannot in any way understand 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' without [understanding that it is] that which alone is greater than everything. As, therefore, 'that-than-which-a-greater cannot-be-thought' is understood and is in the mind, and is consequently judged to exist in true reality, so also that which is greater than everything is said to be understood and to exist in the mind, and so is necessarily inferred to exist in reality itself. You see, then, how right you were to compare me with that stupid person who wished to maintain that the Lost Island existed from the sole fact that being described it was understood.

[VI.] You object, moreover, that any unreal or doubtfully real things at all can equally be understood and exist in the mind in the same way as the being I was speaking of. I am astonished that you urge this [objection] against me, for I was concerned to prove something which was in doubt, and for me it was sufficient that I should first show that it was understood and existed in the mind *in some way or other*, leaving it to be determined subsequently whether it was in the mind alone as unreal things are, or in reality also as true things are. For, if unreal or doubtfully real things are understood and exist in the mind in the sense that, when they are spoken of, he who hears them understands what the speaker means, nothing prevents what I have spoken of being understood and existing in the mind. But how are these [assertions] consistent, that is, when you assert that if someone speaks of unreal things you would understand whatever he says, and that, in the case of a thing which is not entertained in thought in the same way as even unreal things are, you do not say that you think of it or have it in thought upon hearing it spoken of, but rather that you understand it and have it in mind since, precisely, you cannot think of it save by understanding it, that is, knowing certainly that the thing exists in reality itself? How, I say, are both [assertions] consistent, namely that unreal things are understood, and that 'to understand' means knowing with certainty that something actually exists? You should have seen that nothing [of this applies] to me.

Quodsi et falsa aliquo modo intelliguntur, et non omnis sed cuiusdam intellectus est hæc definitio: non debui reprehendi, quia dixi 'quo maius cogitari non possit' intelligi et in intellectu esse, etiam antequam certum esset re ipsa illud existere.

[VII.] Deinde quod dicis vix umquam posse esse credibile, cum dictum et auditum fuerit istud, non eo modo posse cogitari non esse quo etiam potest cogitari non esse deus: respondeant pro me qui vel parvam scientiam disputandi argumentandique attigerunt. An enim rationabile est, ut idcirco neget aliquis quod intelligit, quia esse dicitur id, quod ideo negat quia non intelligit? Aut si aliquando negatur, quod aliquatenus intelligitur et idem est illi quod nullatenus intelligitur: nonne facilius probatur quod dubium est de illo quod in aliquo quam de eo quod in nullo est intellectu? Quare nec credibile potest esse idcirco quemlibet negare 'quo maius cogitari nequit', quod auditum aliquatenus intelligit: quia negat deum, cuius sensum nullo modo cogitat. Aut si et illud quia non omnino intelligitur negatur: nonne tamen facilius id quod aliquo modo, quam id quod nullo modo intelligitur probatur? Non ergo irrationabiliter contra insipientem ad probandum deum esse attuli 'quo maius cogitari non possit', cum illud nullo modo, istud aliquo modo intelligeret.

[VIII.] Quod vero tam studiose probas 'quo maius cogitari nequit' non tale esse qualis nondum facta pictura in intellectu pictoris: sine causa fit. Non enim ad hoc protuli picturam præcogitatam, ut tale illud de quo agebatur vellem asserere, sed tantum ut aliquid esse in intellectu, quod esse non intelligeretur, possem ostendere.

But if unreal things are, in a sense, understood (this definition applying not to every kind of understanding but to a certain kind) then I ought not to be criticized for having said that 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' is understood and is in the mind, even before it was certain that it existed in reality itself.

[VII.] Next, you say that it can hardly be believed that when this [that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought] has been spoken of and heard, it cannot be thought not to exist, as even it can be thought that God does not exist. Now those who have attained even a little expertise in disputation and argument could reply to that on my behalf. For is it reasonable that someone should therefore deny what he understands because it is said to be [the same as] that which he denies since he does not understand it? Or if that is denied [to exist] which is understood only to some extent and is the same as what is not understood at all, is not what is in doubt more easily proved from the fact that it is in some mind than from the fact that it is in no mind at all? For this reason it cannot be believed that anyone should deny 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' (which, being heard, he understands to some extent), on the ground that he denies God whose meaning he does not think of in any way at all. On the other hand, if it is denied on the ground that it is not understood completely, even so is not that which is understood in some way easier to prove than that which is not understood in any way? It was therefore not wholly without reason that, to prove against the Fool that God exists, I proposed 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought', since he would understand this in some way, [whereas] he would understand the former [God] in no way at all.

[VIII.] In fact, your painstaking argument that 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' is not like the not-yet-realized painting in the mind of the painter is beside the point. For I did not propose [the example] of the foreknown picture because I wanted to assert that what was at issue was in the same case, but rather that so I could show that something not understood as existing exists in the mind.



Item quod dicis 'quo maius cogitari nequit' secundum rem vel ex genere tibi vel ex specie notam te cogitare auditum vel in intellectu habere non posse, quoniam nec ipsam rem nosti, nec eam ex alia simili potes conicere: palam est rem aliter sese habere. Quoniam namque omne minus bonum in tantum est simile maiori bono inquantum est bonum: patet cuilibet rationabili menti, quia de bonis minoribus ad maiora con-scendendo ex iis quibus aliquid maius cogitari potest, multum possumus conicere illud quo nihil potest maius cogitari. Quis enim verbi gratia vel hoc cogitare non potest, etiam si non credat in re esse quod cogitat, scilicet si bonum est aliquid quod initium et finem habet, multo melius esse bonum, quod licet incipiat non tamen desinit; et sicut istud illo melius est, ita isto esse melius illud quod nec finem habet nec initium, etiam si semper de præterito per præsens transeat ad futurum; et sive sit in re aliquid huiusmodi sive non sit, valde tamen eo melius esse id quod nullo modo indiget vel cogitur mutari vel moveri? An hoc cogitari non potest, aut aliquid hoc maius cogitari potest? Aut non est hoc ex iis quibus maius cogitari valet conicere id quo maius cogitari nequit? Est igitur unde possit conici 'quo maius cogitari nequeat'. Sic itaque facile refelli potest insipiens qui sacram auctoritatem non recipit, si negat 'quo maius cogitari non valet' ex aliis rebus conici posse. At si quis catholicus hoc neget, meminerit quia 'invisibilia' dei 'a creatura mundi per ea, quæ facta sunt, intellecta conspiciuntur, sempiterna quoque eius virtus et divinitas'.

[IX.] Sed etsi verum esset non posse cogitari vel intelligi illud quo maius nequit cogitari, non tamen falsum esset 'quo maius cogitari nequit' cogitari posse et intelligi. Sicut enim nil prohibet dici 'ineffabile', licet illud dici non possit quod

Again, you say that upon hearing of 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' you cannot think of it as a real object known either generically or specifically or have it in your mind, on the grounds that you neither know the thing itself nor can you form an idea of it from other things similar to it. But obviously this is not so. For since everything that is less good is similar in so far as it is good to that which is more good, it is evident to every rational mind that, mounting from the less good to the more good we can from those things than which something greater can be thought conjecture a great deal about that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. Who, for example, cannot think of this (even if he does not believe that what he thinks of actually exists) namely, that if something that has a beginning and end is good, that which, although it has had a beginning, does not, however, have an end, is much better? And just as this latter is better than the former, so also that which has neither beginning nor end is better again than this, even if it passes always from the past through the present to the future. Again, whether something of this kind actually exists or not, that which does not lack anything at all, nor is forced to change or move, is very much better still. Cannot this be thought? Or can we think of something greater than this? Or is not this precisely to form an idea of that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought from those things than which a greater can be thought? There is, then, a way by which one can form an idea of 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. In this way, therefore, the Fool who does not accept the sacred authority [of Revelation] can easily be refuted if he denies that he can form an idea from other things of 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. But if any orthodox Christian should deny this let him remember that 'the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen through the things that have been made, even his eternal power and Godhead' [Rom. i. 20].

[IX.] But even if it were true that [the object] that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought cannot be thought of nor understood, it would not, however, be false that [the formula] 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' could be thought of and understood. For just as nothing prevents one

'ineffabile' dicitur; et quemadmodum cogitari potest 'non cogitabile', quamvis illud cogitari non possit cui convenit 'non cogitabile' dici: ita cum dicitur 'quo nil maius valet cogitari', procul dubio quod auditur cogitari et intelligi potest, etiam si res illa cogitari non valeat aut intelligi qua maius cogitari nequit. Nam etsi quisquam est tam insipiens, ut dicat non esse aliquid quo maius non possit cogitari: non tamen ita erit impudens, ut dicat se non posse intelligere aut cogitare quid dicat. Aut si quis talis invenitur, non modo sermo eius est respuendus, sed et ipse conspuendus. Quisquis igitur negat aliquid esse quo maius nequeat cogitari: utique intelligit et cogitat negationem quam facit. Quam negationem intelligere aut cogitare non potest sine partibus eius. Pars autem eius est 'quo maius cogitari non potest'. Quicumque igitur hoc negat, intelligit et cogitat 'quo maius cogitari nequit'. Palam autem est quia similiter potest cogitari et intelligi quod non potest non esse. Maius vero cogitat qui hoc cogitat quam qui cogitat quod possit non esse. Dum ergo cogitatur quo maius non possit cogitari: si cogitatur quod possit non esse, non cogitatur quo non possit cogitari maius. Sed nequit idem simul cogitari et non cogitari. Quare qui cogitat quo maius non possit cogitari: non cogitat quod possit sed quod non possit non esse. Quapropter necesse est esse quod cogitat, quia quidquid non esse potest non est quod cogitat.

[X.] Puto quia monstravi me non infirma sed satis necessaria argumentatione probasse in præfato libello re ipsa existere aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit; nec eam alicuius obiectionis infirmari firmitate. Tantam enim vim huius prolationis in se continet significatio, ut hoc ipsum quod dicitur, ex necessitate eo ipso quod intelligitur vel cogitatur, et revera probetur existere, et id ipsum esse quidquid de divina sub-

from saying 'ineffable' although one cannot specify what is said to be ineffable; and just as one can think of the inconceivable—although one cannot think of what 'inconceivable' applies to—so also, when 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' is spoken of, there is no doubt at all that what is heard can be thought of and understood even if the thing itself cannot be thought of and understood. For if someone is so witless as to say that there is not something than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, yet he will not be so shameless as to say that he is not able to understand and think of what he was speaking about. Or if such a one is to be found, not only should his assertion be condemned, but he himself contemned. Whoever, then, denies that there is something than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, at any rate understands and thinks of the denial he makes, and this denial cannot be understood and thought about apart from its elements. Now, one element [of the denial] is 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. Whoever, therefore, denies this understands and thinks of 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought'. It is evident, moreover, that in the same way one can think of and understand that which cannot not exist. And one who thinks of this thinks of something greater than one who thinks of what can not exist. When, therefore, one thinks of that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, if one thinks of what can not exist, one does not think of that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. Now the same thing cannot at the same time be thought of and not thought of. For this reason he who thinks of that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought does not think of something that can not exist but something that cannot not exist. Therefore what he thinks of exists necessarily, since whatever can not exist is not what he thinks of.

[X.] I think now that I have shown that I have proved in the above tract, not by a weak argumentation but by a sufficiently necessary one, that something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists in reality itself, and that this proof has not been weakened by the force of any objection. For the import of this proof is in itself of such force that what is spoken of is proved (as a necessary consequence of the fact that it is understood or thought of) both to exist in actual reality and to be itself what-

stantia oportet credere. Credimus namque de divina substantia quidquid absolute cogitari potest melius esse quam non esse. Verbi gratia: melius est esse æternum quam non æternum, bonum quam non bonum, immo bonitatem ipsam quam non ipsam bonitatem. Nihil autem huiusmodi non esse potest quo maius aliquid cogitari non potest. Necesse igitur est 'quo maius cogitari non potest' esse quidquid de divina essentia credi oportet.

Gratias ago benignitati tuæ et in reprehensione et in laude mei opusculi. Cum enim ea quæ tibi digna susceptione videntur tanta laude extulisti: satis apparet quia quæ tibi infirma visa sunt benevolentia non malevolentia reprehendisti.

ever must be believed about the Divine Being. For we believe of the Divine Being whatever it can, absolutely speaking, be thought better to be than not to be. For example, it is better to be eternal than not eternal, good than not good, indeed goodness-itself than not goodness-itself. However, nothing of this kind cannot but be that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought. It is, then, necessary that 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' should be whatever must be believed about the Divine Nature.

I thank you for your kindness both in criticizing and praising my tract. For since you praised so fulsomely those parts that appeared to you to be worthy of acceptance, it is quite clear that you have criticized those parts that seemed to you to be weak, not from any malice but from good will.

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